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A STUDY OF THE
STRATEGY AND TACTICS
OF THE
MESOPOTAMIA
CAMPAIGN

1914-1918

With Special Reference to General Maude's Operations

ILLUSTRATING
THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

(WITH THIRTEEN MAPS)



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MESOPOTAMIA
1914-1918**

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IN
MESOPOTAMIA
1914-1918

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE CAMPAIGN FROM ITS
INCEPTION TO GENERAL MAUDE'S ACCESSION TO
COMMAND; A MORE DETAILED STUDY OF THE CAM-
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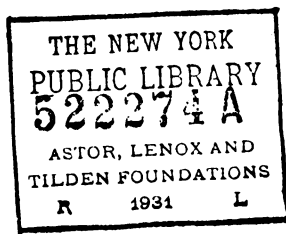
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

SIR Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., present this work as an Introduction to their Military Postal Courses, on which officers may rely for help in all examinations which they will be required to pass, from their entrance to the Army, through promotion, to the Staff College. These Courses are the result of much thought and consideration by experienced military instructors, and consequently the requirements of officers of all ranks will be adequately met. Similarly, the work on this Campaign has been carried out with scrupulous care and accuracy. Comments are given with the same judgment, impartiality, and knowledge as will be at the disposal of those who work through these Courses.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN war was declared against Turkey our aims and policy were clearly defined. It was decided to send a brigade, two mountain batteries, and two companies of sappers to a position on the left bank of the Shatt-al-Arab, in order to check Turkish intrigues, to protect the oil installations at Abadan, to confirm the Shaikhs of Mohammerah and Kuwait in their loyalty, and to safeguard Egypt.

As time went on the scope of the expedition was continually altered, and after the capture of the Basra vilayet there was no real military objective. On this subject Sir William Robertson writes: "We had committed ourselves to expeditions on a large scale, and in remote theatres, which were strategically unsound, and had never been properly thought out. The false direction thus given to our strategy imperilled the chances of ultimate success, and at least was bound to hang round our necks like a millstone for the remainder of the war." Man power and resources were diverted from the decisive time and place against our main enemy on the Western Front. The Turkish forces in Mesopotamia never exceeded six divisions. At the end of 1916 when troops and ammunition were needed in France we had 200,000 fighting men on this Mesopotamia front, and by the end of 1917 eight divisions and two cavalry divisions were maintained at the front. The principle of economy of force was never adequately considered in making our plans. Policy dictated the course of the campaign, the details as to how we were to carry out this policy were not considered in the advance up the River Tigris leading to the surrender of General Townshend's sixth Division in Kut on the 29th April, 1916.

In addition to the drain on man-power owing to our offensive policy in Mesopotamia, there was a great strain on our resources. Before the end of the war we had so much developed the roadless unprofitable country that 3,000 tons of supplies could daily be delivered in Baghdad.

We had 300 steamers, and 800 barges on the River Tigris for the delivery of these supplies. Basra had been converted

into a port in which twenty vessels could be unloaded at one time. 6,000 Chinese mechanics worked day and night at this port.

The metre gauge line ran in two sections from Basra to Nasiriya and to Amara, over a length of 256 miles, from Kut via Baghdad to the Persian frontier for 236 miles, from Baghdad for 132 miles up the Tigris to Baiji, and for 104 miles down the Euphrates via Hilla to Dibbhan. A 2 ft. 6 in. railway ran from Baghdad to Faluja. During the war we built 698 miles of metre gauge, 118 miles of standard gauge, and 59 miles of light railway, which finally absorbed an establishment of 25,000 men for railway personnel. The Narrows were lit with electricity at night, and channels were improved and marked throughout the course of the River Tigris. Marching roads for all arms were made up to the Tigris and on to Qasrishinn and across North Persia to Kazvin.

All this was being done when every available man and all our resources were required to deal with our main enemy on the Western Front. It could only be by defeating the Germans that the war could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. We had carried out our original plans when we had captured the Basra vilayet. After this there was a violation of the principle of economy of force.

Our forces in Mesopotamia were augmented, and offensive operations were continued. Such operations were bound to be costly and difficult. The country was admirably suited to defensive tactics. The water-cuts could be quickly formed into effective trenches hard to locate. The flat plain giving the enemy an excellent field of fire, the lack of cover, and the inundations under control of the enemy added to the difficulties of the attack. Mirage added to the difficulty of artillery support. A heavy fall of rain converted the desert into a slippery glutinous swamp precluding any rapid movement or wide envelopment. Sir Mark Sykes describes the conditions of the campaign as follows: "A winding river which is restless in its bed, capricious in its fall, uncertain in its rise, and sown with shifting shoals and sands is the sole means of communication between Baghdad and the sea; it is the inevitable line of supply, advance, or retreat for Turks and British. On either hand stretches limitless plain, showing a horizon as level as the sea, save for here and there a mound of ancient ruin, a rare ridge, or faint undulation.

This unending plain, however, must not be imagined to be of completely easy passage, for its faint depressions are swamps of unknown shape with bays and inlets, while at right angles to the river banks run dried canals and cuttings, with hard ridges on either hand.

"As for the population, it is base, semi-nomadic Arab, cruel, treacherous, and rascally as the town influence can make it, yet predatory with primitive Bedawi instinct. On the day of battle they haunt the outskirts of the fight, plunder the wounded and stragglers impartially, harass the retreat of the defeated side, hoist white flags over their tents, and make professions of unswerving fidelity to whatsoever seems to be in the ascendant.

"Thus in the present stage there are three natural factors—the river, the land, and the people. The river may block your advance by a new and unexpected mud bank; the land may thwart your plans by unmapped swamps; the people will accentuate every mishap that may befall, plunder your convoys, threaten your hospitals, cut your telegraph wires, and supply you and your opponents with unreliable information."

As we had insufficient means of carrying out a campaign in such a country dependent on a river for our existence in it, and without means of navigating this river with sufficient craft to keep our forces up river supplied with necessities, it is suggested that after gaining our original objective we should have given the Turks the difficult task of advancing to attack us. Our positions could have been maintained adequately without undue strain on man-power, shipping, and resources by holding Ahwaz, Qurna, and Nasiriya each with a brigade with a striking force of one division and two cavalry brigades at Basra.

Had we wished to deal decisively with the Turks in the Middle East in one co-ordinated effort we might have struck at Aleppo via Alexandretta in order to sever their communications in Mesopotamia and Palestine. The offensive policy of this campaign should have stopped on the 9th December, 1914, when we entered Qurna at the junction of the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. This would probably have been done had the campaign been controlled by the War Office, but it was directed by the Government of India. The General Staff at the War Office would have been able to take a broader view of the Empire's needs for the conclusion as

early as possible of the war at the place where a decisive result was required, and would have co-ordinated our efforts in the many theatres of war in which we were engaged.

A diversion of military strength and resources to an objective of secondary importance to the degree which obtained finally in this campaign would not have been sanctioned. The Government of India naturally saw their own point of view most clearly.

They considered the safety of the north-west frontier and the favourable effect that an advance in Mesopotamia would have on the situation there. Success on the Tigris would divert German and Turkish troops and resources away from the disturbed elements in Afghanistan, and would favourably impress the Mohammedan world. Every step we took forward up the River Tigris deprived the enemy of possible advanced bases, and increased our prestige in the East. These were the points of view of the Indian Government. On the other hand, had we adopted the strategic defensive we should have been able to make adequate expenditure to improve the military conditions on our north-west frontier of India, the point about which the Government of India were always apprehensive, and where they wished to consolidate our position. After the capture of Qurna we advanced to Amara and Nasiriya. Then our offensive operations, guided chiefly by the policy of adding to our prestige, led us to Baghdad, Samarra, Tekrit, Mosul, and to the north-west of Persia. Our prestige in the Middle East would not have been impaired by prudence; we paid heavily for imprudence when approximately 9,000 men surrendered to the Turks at Kut on the 29th April, 1916, when our casualties had not been fewer than 45,000, and our fighting forces had been raised to 122,000, or ten times as many men as that originally allotted for operations in Mesopotamia. By the end of 1914 Turkish influence in the Shatt-al-Arab delta had been destroyed, and British interests in the oilfields area and at Basra had been made secure. In the new year the India Office definitely decided on a forward policy and by the spring of 1915 the Force was brought up to the strength of a Corps under General Sir John Nixon, who arrived on the 9th April to command it. General Nixon decided first to deal with the gathering of Turks and Arabs in Arabistan on his right flank. In spite of the fact that the

Turks had been reinforced our costly offensive operations now started.

We might at this juncture have realized the value of the defensive. The Turks who attacked our troops at Ahwaz, Qurna, and Shaiba were in each case driven off. By 20th April there were no enemy within 100 miles of Basra. However, a force was concentrated at Ahwaz under General Gorringe, who was instructed to drive the enemy into Turkish territory. This was successfully accomplished. Our operations in this area extended over a period of seven weeks. The work was arduous, for the heat was already severe, and the troops had to begin by crossing the Karkha, a river 250 yds. broad with a deep and rapid stream. The advance up the Tigris from Qurna was the main operation of the summer campaign.

It was one of exceptional difficulty, for it had to be carried on across the flooded tracts. The Turkish force was entrenched a few miles north of Qurna on two groups of islands, one group 3 miles in rear of the other, standing out above the surface of the floods.

The positions were strongly entrenched, requiring carefully organized attacks by combined naval and military forces. The attack began by a heavy bombardment from Qurna and the floating batteries, and then the infantry advanced to the assault in a flotilla of bellums supported by the fire of the guns. To carry Norfolk Hill troops had to pole their boats over a mile through thick reeds, and then to land to assault it in water waist deep. Behind the assaulting troops came the naval sloops and armed tugs preceded by a line of mine-sweepers. Their fire combined with that of the land artillery enabled us to capture their first group of islands. On the morning of the 1st June our airmen reported that the Turks had evacuated their second group of positions, and were in full retreat up the river. The naval flotilla went in pursuit, followed up by the troops.

By the 3rd June we captured 1,800 prisoners, and we entered Amara, 86 miles from Qurna. Then our difficulties of navigation and supply were increased. Fifty-seven miles from Qurna is Qala Salih, where the Tigris Narrows are.

No navigation was possible during the hours of darkness, or if there was a fog or a sand haze, as vessels could not pass one another unless the one going up-river was tied up to the bank. The current of the Tigris varies from $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles an

hour to 6 miles an hour, and the average depth at low water was 5 ft. Amara was an important point, as from it runs a desert road a 100 miles long to Ahwaz on the River Karun. Its possession would prevent trouble in the Ahwaz district, through which passed the pipe line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. After our success on the 3rd June the remainder of the Turkish forces under Nur-ed-Din Pasha withdrew 153 miles up the River Tigris to Kut. The heat was now intense; there was a shortage of fresh vegetables and of medical necessities. The health of the troops was not good, but there was only a short pause in operations. The advance to Amara had exposed the left flank of the 6th Division.

General Nixon, therefore, decided to secure this flank by occupying Nasiriya, and routing the Turkish forces in the vicinity.

The occupation of this place would close the military communication from the River Tigris to the River Euphrates down the Hai river, which runs between Kut and Nasiriya, 100 miles north-west of Basra.

On 27th June an expedition under General Gorringe started from Qurna against Nasiriya. All the country between the two rivers was flood and marsh, through which ran many old channels. The force, consisting of infantry and a naval contingent, forced its way to the Euphrates by way of the Hammar lake. That amphibious journey through a series of creeks and lagoons, and thick date groves, in great heat, accompanied by swarms of flies and mosquitoes, was one of considerable difficulty and hardship. Five miles short of Nasiriya, General Gorringe found the Turks entrenched in a series of formidable positions on both sides of the river, with their flanks resting on marshes, and their front covered by deep irrigation channels. After one unsuccessful attempt at turning the enemy's right flank, the British troops were reinforced. They remained for some days, facing the position, and making preparations for a decisive attack. On 24th July it was delivered in spite of stubborn resistance, the lines of entrenchments were carried with the help of the co-operation of the Navy, with close range fire from small gunboats. The Turks had 500 dead in the captured trenches, and 17 guns and 1,000 prisoners were taken. Our loss was under 600. On 25th July Nasiriya was occupied without further fighting. The importance of this victory

was, to use General Nixon's words, important as it was "the dominant place on this flank." It was, he said, the base from which a hostile force threatening Basra must start; it was the centre from which influence could be exercised among the powerful Arab tribes on the Euphrates; and it was the headquarters of their civil administrations of a large part of this area. It stood at the southern end of the Shatt-el-Hai, which was the usual line of communication from north to south.

General Nixon had now pushed forward his line along both the Tigris and Euphrates, to a distance of approximately 100 miles from his former advanced post at Qurna.

His foremost troops on each of these rivers were nearly 200 miles from the sea. The outermost points were now Ahwaz, Amara, and Nasiriya. It might have been supposed that the stretch of country below these points was already large enough for two divisions to hold, in order to cover securely the future terminus of the Baghdad railway and the line of oil wells. However, this was not the official view.

Strong Turkish forces under Nur-ed-Din Pasha were reported at Kut on the River Tigris, 153 miles by river from Amara. It was then decided that the defeat of this force and the occupation of Kut-el-Amara were necessary. The day after Nasiriya was secured, General Nixon began to transfer troops from General Gorrings's division on the left to General Townshend's division in the centre. The reason given for this further advance was that Kut was a rallying point for the enemy's troops, it lay at the northern end of the Shatt-el-Hai, and that it was, therefore, like Nasiriya at the southern end of a strategical point of importance. With both places in British hands, effective control of the northern part of the Basra district would be secured. The Government of India acquiesced, as they considered that an advance to Kut would have a favourable effect on the political situation in Persia.

On 1st August the further advance began in spite of a serious shortage of road and river transport. A detachment from General Townshend's force, with a naval flotilla, pushed up the river and occupied Ali-Gharbi, a point half-way between the Amara and Kut. At this point the whole division was gradually concentrated until on the 12th September, it was ready to advance.

The force marched up the bank of the river, the flotilla following.

There was practically no opposition, but the thermometer stood at 110° in the shade, which made the marching very arduous. On 15th September Townshend's force reached Abu-Ramman. Here a halt was made, as news was brought in that the enemy were occupying an entrenched position 8 miles further on.

After severe fighting a fine victory was won at Es Sinn on the 28th September, and Kut was occupied on the following day. General Nixon was now 213 miles from Baghdad by the river, on which we were dependent for our existence in the country.

His successes appeared to justify further offensive operations to capture this important forward base and centre of all Turkish lines of advance through Persia or down the Tigris.

Its capture would counterbalance the lack of success at Gallipoli, and on the Western Front, and would deprive the Germans of a valuable base for operations towards Afghanistan and the north-west frontier.

The fall of Baghdad would have a great effect among all the Mussalmen in the East, it was thought by those responsible for the direction of the campaign. On the other hand, the practical question was whether the British forces in that part of the world could expect to be strong enough to deal with possible Turkish reinforcements which might reasonably be brought against us from their army of 2,850,000, in view of our definite responsibilities against our main enemy on the Western Front. General Nixon's force had suffered heavily from casualties and sickness. His transport was inadequate for its maintenance. No reinforcements were immediately available. His force was scattered between Ahwaz, Kut, and Nasiriya. In view of the reported Turkish reinforcements it was not prudent to undertake fresh operations, which would involve renewed losses and the lengthening of the already long line of communications. The provision of a garrison to hold and police Baghdad would dangerously weaken our force, which could be attacked from three sides. Further, to secure Baghdad from being flooded and isolated, it would be necessary not only to hold the city but to send detachments up the Tigris and on to the River Euphrates, thus dispersing the available striking

force. General Nixon, however, reported that he was strong enough to capture Baghdad with the forces at his disposal, and if he was reinforced by two divisions he could hold it against any hostile counter-attacks. General Nixon's views were accepted, and the dispatch of two divisions from France as reinforcements for him was authorized. In the meantime the Turks fell back to a prepared position at Ctesiphon.

The 6th Division advanced to Aziziya.

By the 19th November the 6th Division, under General Townshend, continued its advance before the reinforcements from France arrived, which had been considered necessary for the secure occupation of Baghdad. General Nixon had been informed by the War Office that Turkish reinforcements were being concentrated against him. This he did not believe, as it was not confirmed by his agents. This may have caused him to advance in spite of the fact that the original conditions as to the divisions required for operations were not fulfilled. In this connection it must be noted that there was no definite co-operation between the Intelligence Branch at the War Office and the Government of India. Plans were evolved as the campaign proceeded without co-ordination, without due weight being given to the capabilities of the armed forces available, and without due consideration of the relative strength and our means of supply and reinforcement. For this advance our plan was based on political considerations without due thought about the organization for keeping the army supplied with its daily requirements in personnel and material. For the first 70 miles of his march on Baghdad, General Townshend was practically unopposed. At Ctesiphon, however, he reached the Turk's main position. He attacked after a night march on the 22nd November, but the enemy's superior strength enabled them to counter-attack in force, and to check our advance after our initial success on the morning of this day. On the 23rd, as he had no reserves, and owing to heavy casualties, his offensive operations could not be resumed. All that could be done now was to ward off the enemy's attacks by their force of four divisions, while we evacuated our 4,500 casualties and the prisoners. Then the retreat began. On the 3rd December after some rearguard fighting Kut was reached. Our opportunist strategy had failed.

Three days later the enemy had closed in on the 6th Division, and had invested Kut. This place had no strong

defensive positions; it was most insanitary; it could be invested by a comparatively small force on the small land front north of the town along the Dahra hills and hutments. There would be great difficulty in taking the offensive from the narrow peninsula in which Kut was situated, as the river was on three sides of the position. It depended for maintenance on long and precarious river communications. However, General Nixon still had in mind the resumption of the offensive as soon as reinforcements should arrive. He hoped to resume his advance on Baghdad in March, 1916, and, therefore, would not sanction the occupation of a position nearer the Base.

He asked for an extra division to bring his force up to five divisions, although it would not be possible with the available transport to maintain these extra troops at the front over his 285 miles of river communication from his base. There were, however, some advantages in remaining at Kut. This place had a strategical importance, it contained large quantities of stores some of which might fall to the enemy. Also General Townshend's troops were exhausted by the 3rd December. General Nixon also considered that prestige would suffer if the retreat was continued beyond this place. General Townshend did propose to withdraw to Ali Gharbi, but this General Nixon would not sanction, as he considered that British prestige and morale would suffer if this further withdrawal was carried out. The easing of the administrative problem for the maintenance of troops 285 miles from the base, with the available river transport capable of a daily delivery of 175 tons only, was not apparently considered before the siege of Kut began. General Nixon telegraphed to General Townshend as follows: "So long as you remain in Kut you are fulfilling the duties of a detachment by holding up superior numbers." Our garrison at Kut certainly did carry out these duties heroically, but the price was the loss of 9,000 men for the duration of the campaign after the 29th April, 1916. For the first four months of 1916 our Tigris Corps, organized from troops drawn from the Western Front and India and Gallipoli, was occupied with efforts, gallant but unavailing, to relieve Kut. The Turks interposed a series of strong positions between Kut and our relieving force. In response to General Townshend's appeals for relief troops were hurried up from Basra, and on arrival were sent into battle. Our movements were

hampered by heavy rain causing floods, by imperfect organization, and inadequate staffs. Our transport was barely sufficient to supply the needs of the original force less than half the size of the relief force.

Our attempts at relief began in January, 1916. We had two costly successes against the Turkish rearguards.

Then our relieving force was checked at their Hanna position on the 21st January, by which time our casualties had been nearly 9,000. General Aylmer now waited until the 8th March, and then, as an alternative to another frontal assault, after a night march made a bold but unsuccessful attempt to turn the Turkish right flank. General Gorringe now succeeded to the command. He continued the frontal attacks on the enemy's position north of the river. The Turks withdrew from their Hanna position, and were then driven from a position at Fallihiya covering Sannaiyat by the 13th Division on the 5th April. On the following day the attempt by the 7th Division to capture the Sannaiyat position failed. This division was unable to gain a position nearer than 700 yds. to the Turkish front trenches at a cost of 60 per cent of their rifle strength. On the 17th April as the renewal of operations on the left bank of the River Tigris was not possible owing to rain having made the ground impassable, the offensive was continued on the right bank. Bait Isa was assaulted and captured by the 3rd Division at a cost of 1,600 casualties. The Turks on this bank withdrew to Es Sinn out of reach for a time of General Gorringe's force. General Gorringe now decided to make another frontal attack against the Sannaiyat position across the open flooded country in front of the Turk's trenches. This frontal attack was made in broad daylight on the restricted front between the Suwaikiya marsh and the River Tigris with inadequate support owing to the lack of high explosive shells. The 7th Division lost 1,300 men in this unsuccessful assault. On the 29th April, 1916, General Townshend at Kut was compelled to surrender. Our casualties in the Relief Force since January had been 40 per cent of the force.

During this time General Lake had assumed command in Mesopotamia, and the control of the campaign in Mesopotamia was transferred to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on the 16th January, 1916. Questions of policy likely to affect the situation in the Persian Gulf and in India were to be referred to the Government of India.

Our policy now was to remain on the defensive, and to secure our force and also the oilfields. The point for consideration now was whether to remain in our forward position or to fall back on Basra. If we withdrew, we should reduce our lines of communication and ease the administrative situation, and we should cause the attackers to encounter the same difficulties which attended our advance.

But there was a new factor in the situation. There was a Russian force of 15,000 men under General Baratoff at Kermanshah. In order then to co-operate with the Russians and prevent the Turks on our present front from concentrating against Baratoff, it was decided to remain in our forward position. The Turks were astride the River Tigris. On the left bank they occupied the Sannaiyat position. On the right bank they were on the River Hai. We occupied the Es Sinn position 11 miles above the Turkish position at Sannaiyat, and on the north bank of the River Tigris our front line ran parallel to the Turkish trenches and 120 yds. from them. Our right flank in this area was secured by the Suwaikiya marsh; our left flank rested on the River Tigris.

The summer campaign of 1916 in Mesopotamia was devoted to preparation for the maintenance of our large army being assembled at our front. Docks, marching roads, wharves, railways, road and river transport and hospitals had to be provided. Similarly, on the Egyptian front vast preparations were being made for an advance on the Turkish positions in the vicinity of Gaza, and for further offensive operations in Syria and Palestine. Russian offensive action in the Caucasus further dissipated the Turkish forces. Erzerum was captured by the Russians in February, 1916, and by April the 200 miles of country between Erzerum and Trebizond had been cleared. Later, they extended their left flank along the western Euphrates. On the 28th August, 1916, General Maude assumed command of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. His first duty was the reorganization of his army. The alternative policies which now had to be considered were the old ones of either an advance or a withdrawal to carry out the original objectives of the campaign. Again the points had to be considered how would our advance towards Baghdad affect our main objective in the war. If we withdrew, we should effect a great economy, and we should eliminate the most troublesome factor of the campaign, namely, the difficulty of communications and

supply. However, having occupied and maintained his forward position, General Maude considered that in view of his advantage over the Turks in numbers, organization, and efficiency, and in his power of movement to outflank them on the right bank, an offensive policy was indicated. He could at any rate deal decisively with the Turks on his front whether Baghdad was his objective or not. He considered that an advance to the River Hai was essential as soon as his force was ready for offensive operations.

His actual plan was to contain the enemy on the left bank of the River Tigris at Sannaiyat, and to advance methodically on the right bank, clearing the enemy from their bridge-head positions, and then to threaten their communications as far west as possible. Thus the enemy would be compelled to hold the whole front and for this they had not sufficient troops available to deal with our superiority in numbers and mobility. Nor if they concentrated at either end of their defences, namely, at Sannaiyat or at Shumran, could they hope to have superior numbers at a decisive point.

Frontal attacks at Sannaiyat had been costly and disastrous; our artillery was not even now sufficiently heavy to deal effectively with their strong works at this place. General Maude's attacks against the Turkish positions astride the River Tigris began on the night of 13/14th December, 1916, and were continued until the enemy was forced to retreat on the 25th February, 1917, towards Baghdad.

This victory caused another change in our policy. The War Office had laid down a defensive role, and the same arguments for this rôle still held good. There would still be the same administrative difficulties and the dispersion of force necessary to secure Baghdad when we arrived there.

However, now we had great superiority and the administration of our forces was on sound lines. The capture of Baghdad would have a favourable effect on the situation throughout the Middle East and in India; but again it must be noted that the decisive area of operations was not in Mesopotamia.

Our policy was now changed to an advance in order to secure our position at Baghdad. On the 11th March, 1917, our troops entered this city while the Russian Caucasus army was slowly advancing towards Mosul, and General Baratoff's force was slowly moving forward towards Baghdad from Kermanshah. General Maude's objectives now

were to intercept the Turkish 13th Corps retiring slowly in front of Baratoff, and to prevent its junction with their 18th Turkish Corps on the River Tigris; to control the inundations on the River Tigris and River Euphrates; to seize the Turks' railhead at Samarra, and to continue to pursue the 18th Turkish Corps up the River Tigris. By the end of April, 1917, the Baghdad vilayet had been secured.

The 13th Corps had, however, evaded both our column operating on the Diyala and the Russians advancing from Kermanshah. They had, however, been three times engaged and had been finally driven back into the Jabal Hamrin. The 18th Corps had fallen back on Tekrit after having been five times defeated during April. Thus the two Turkish Corps had been driven apart in divergent directions. In every direction the enemy were at least 80 miles from Baghdad, and the terminal section of the Baghdad railway was in our hands. General Maude now left sufficient troops to guard the positions won, and withdrew the bulk of his forces into reserve, distributing them into camps along the River Tigris banks. During the next four months the troops rested and reorganized. Early in June Baratoff withdrew beyond Karind towards Kermanshah.

This caused Maude to reoccupy Beled Ruz, which was on the canal entering the River Diyala at Mansuriya. On the 28th September the 15th Division occupied Ramadi on the River Euphrates. Having rendered the position on the River Euphrates secure, Maude now turned his attention to his right flank beyond Shahraban. By the middle of October several columns succeeded in occupying the whole section of the Jabal Hamrin situated west of the River Diyala, and also portions of the range to the east of that river. On the right bank of the River Tigris the Turks were also successfully attacked in a position midway between Samarra and Tekrit, and were driven back early in November, 1917, to Tekrit. This was the last operation of the Mesopotamia Force under General Maude.

His victories had given him a strong position, for the enemy had no good advanced bases from which Falkenhayn could launch a counter-attack. On the 19th November General Maude died. He was a trusted and greatly respected commander. His great administrative ability was equalled only by the skill and determination with which he carried out his plans. For his successor, General Marshall, the possibilities

of operations against the Turks were somewhat restricted, as both on the River Euphrates and on the River Tigris the Turks had retreated out of rapid striking distance. It was only on the right flank on the road to Mosul that there was a chance of striking the Turkish 13th Corps holding the passes over the Jabal Hamrin. On the 3rd December General Egerton's column attacked the Turks, and drove them through Kifri. In 1918 during March the Turks became aggressive on the Euphrates.

Accordingly, General Marshall gave orders for offensive operations to be undertaken towards Hit. These operations were quite successful, and the Turks were pursued up to Ana. Their losses in prisoners alone were 5,200. By the early summer the Turks had been defeated on all their lines of advance, and our advanced positions extended to the line Kifn-Tekrit-Salahiya.

In addition, General Marshall opened up the main trade route via Kermanshah, and also maintained order in Ahwaz, Shushtar, and Dizful.

The situation for the 6th Turkish Army on the Tigris front became precarious as soon as the Palestine offensive was launched in September, 1918. Turkish reinforcements were hurried to Syria. The 6th Army thus was unsupported. When General Allenby's troops were close to Aleppo, General Marshall renewed his operations in Mesopotamia. By the 30th October the Turks, hemmed in to a position on the hills covering Shergat, surrendered their whole force. By the 1st November our leading troops were within 12 miles of Mosul. Two days later we occupied this town. We had thus brought this war to a successful conclusion in spite of the difficulties of operating in a country where the population was hostile, in spite of the hardships endured owing to the insects, the variations in climate, and the natural obstacles which the country offered.

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THE MESOPOTAMIA CAMPAIGN 1914-1918

CHAPTER I

A SUMMARY OF EVENTS

GENERAL NARRATIVE

1914

2nd November. Russia declared war on Turkey.

5th November. France and Britain declared war on Turkey.

Before this date, however, a force under General Delamain, escorted by H.M.S. *Ocean* and *Dalhousie*, had arrived at Bahrein on the 23rd October. The orders given to General Delamain were (1) to secure the co-operation of the Shaikhs of Mohammerah and Kuwait, (2) to secure the oil works at Abadan, and protect British interests at the head of the Persian Gulf, (3) to capture Fao, (4) to reconnoitre Umm Qasr and the road from this place to Basra.

The following points should be noted—

	MILES	
	<i>River</i>	<i>Land</i>
Baghdad to Kut	215	103
Kut to Amara	153	120
Amara to Qurna	89	
Qurna to Basra	46	
Basra to Fao	68	
Baghdad to Fao	571	
Draught to Basra	19 ft.	
„ „ Qurna	14 ft.	
„ „ above Ezra's Tomb	4 ft.	

If Basra was too strongly held for General Delamain's force to attack it with a prospect of success, then it would be necessary to send out reinforcements from India, so that this place could be attacked from the south-west. The reinforcements would disembark at Umm Qasr.

The composition of General Delamain's force was as follows—

16th Infantry Brigade, i.e. 1 British and 3 Indian battalions. In each battalion were two maxim guns.

An Indian Artillery Brigade with two mountain batteries. Each battery had six 10-pounder guns, carried on mules.

A company of sappers and miners with bridging and rafting equipment.

A section of a Divisional Supply Company.

A Field Ambulance.

Two Mule Corps.

A Supply Column.

A Field Post Office.

An Ordnance Field Park.

The total ration strength was 91 British officers and 918 British other ranks, and 82 Indian officers and 3,640 Indian other ranks.

Opposed to this force in Mesopotamia there would be 11 battalions and 9 companies, 10 artillery batteries and 1 squadron.

Out of a possible total of 380 sabres, 44 field guns, 17,000 rifles, and 3 machine guns the Turks had in the vicinity of Basra 18 guns, 4,700 rifles, and 3 machine guns. This force they further split up to oppose General Delamain's landing at Fao, where they kept only 110 rifles and 4 guns.

6th November. H.M.S. *Odin* bombarded the Fao guns and silenced them. A detachment of 2 battalions, 3 companies, 100 marines, 2 mountain guns, and a naval beach party landed at 15.45 hours without opposition.

H.M.S. *Espiègle* moved down the river and anchored south of the oil works at Abadan.

The Turkish trenches in the vicinity were bombarded, and landing parties cut the wires between Basra and Fao.

7th November. The Fao detachment was re-embarked and taken 16 miles above Fao. One company, 117th Mahrattas, was left at Fao as a garrison.

8th November. Our advanced detachment began to land during the afternoon, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles upstream of the oil works.

9th November. The disembarkation of our troops was continued without loss from the few Arab snipers in the vicinity.

11th November. About 300 Turks at 17.30 hours attacked an outlying fort 700 yds. from our camp. This fort was held by a company, 117th Mahrattas, without difficulty, while the 20th Punjabis, supported by the 23rd Mountain Battery, made a counter-attack, drove back the Turks and inflicted 80 casualties on them.

Information was received that the Turks intended to renew their attacks when they had been reinforced. General Delamain, therefore, decided not to advance on Shamshamiya (15 miles north-west of Abadan), but to remain in his present position, where he could carry out his mission of defending the oil works at Abadan.

14th November. The 6th Division began to disembark at Sanniya (2 miles west of Abadan, on the right bank of the Shatt-al-Arab). This division was commanded by General Barrett. His orders were to capture Basra. His division consisted of the 10th Field Brigade, R.A., with 3 batteries, the 18th Infantry Brigade with one British and three Indian battalions, two squadrons of cavalry, and the following—

A company of sappers and miners.

A Pioneer Battalion. A Divisional Signal Company.

Two Mule Corps.

An Ordnance Field Park.

A Field Veterinary Section.

An Imperial Service Transport Corps.

A Military Accounts Department.

Three Camel Corps.

The total ration strength of these reinforcements was 184 British officers and 1,691 other ranks, with 158 Indian officers and 5,013 other ranks.

15th November. General Delamain took two battalions and a mountain battery to make a reconnaissance in force towards the enemy located at Saihan (4 miles west of the camp at Abadan).

Later, this force was reinforced by a battalion and a battery from the camp. The Turkish position was captured by 10.30 hours, after their entrenched positions had been enveloped on both flanks in spite of the difficulties encountered from mirage. Consequently the infantry had difficulty in keeping touch on the front to be attacked, with H.M.S. *Odin* and *Espiègle* in the river.

We had 62 casualties and we inflicted 160 on the enemy, capturing 25 prisoners and 2 machine guns.

The attitude of the Arabs after this battle was characteristic of their operations throughout this campaign. They remained near both armies, and after a battle murdered the wounded and stragglers, and robbed the living and dead on both sides. It was not until an area became definitely occupied that the Shaikhs were able to maintain order among

their tribes. Native police worked under the Shaikhs to keep order in the towns and along the lines of communication. The Shaikh of Mohammerah now asked for protection from Turkish forces on the west bank of the river. General Barrett, therefore, decided to advance in order to safeguard the Shaikh.

17th November. The 6th Division advanced in a north-westerly direction across the desert. The advanced guard under General Fry consisted of a squadron, a mountain battery, a company of sappers and miners, and two battalions. The ships *Espiègle*, *Odin*, *Lewis Pelly*, and armed tug *Sirdar-i-Naphte* kept in line with this force. The advanced guard's role was to drive any enemy encountered towards the river, where they would be dealt with by guns and machine guns from the ships. When, however, the enemy were encountered this intention had to be abandoned as the Turks' right flank extended too far to make possible a co-ordinated movement supported by artillery. Therefore, the original plan was modified. The advanced guard engaged the Turk's right and centre with a frontal attack, while the 16th Brigade was sent forward to turn their left flank.

This turning movement was checked by enemy detachments thrown back on the Turkish left. Their flank was difficult to locate owing to the thick undergrowth among the date palms. The artillery were not able to support the attacks owing to the mirage which made observation of fire difficult, and owing to the enemy being in concealed trenches and using smokeless powder. The final assault was carried out by the Dorset Regiment round the Turk's left flank.

The Turks vacated their trenches and fort at 13.15 hours, and retired in a north-westerly direction, covered by their artillery. Our advance was impeded by the heavy state of the ground. The pursuit had to be discontinued at 15.00 hours in order to arrange and fortify a camp for the night. A sandstorm added to our difficulties and favoured the enemy in their retreat, as our warships could not follow them up with their fire.

Out of a total force of 4,850 and 12 guns in the Turkish position their casualties were up to 2,000, and their prisoners were 150. We captured two mountain guns. Our losses were 489.

Our force camped for the night at Sahil.

The Turks withdrew to a position at Baljamiya (8 miles north-west of Sahil).

The Secretary of State for India now approved of the capture of Basra as the next objective for General Barrett's force.

21st November. H.M.S. *Espiègle* and *Odin* passed through the obstruction in the river between Shamshamiya and Dabba islands, and reached Basra at 17.30 hours.

The Turks had evacuated their positions at Baljamiya. Our landing parties prevented the Arabs from looting. General Barrett's main force began to march on Basra at 20.00 hours.

22nd November. General Fry, commanding a detachment consisting of two mountain guns, two battalions, a wireless section, and a section field ambulance, landed at Basra from the *Mejidieh* and *Blosse Lynch* at 09.30 hours.

General Barrett's main Force bivouacked near the Khora creek, south of Basra.

23rd November. General Barrett's force entered Basra. The town was found to be unsuitable for troops, owing to its insanitary condition.

At this time, owing to the situation on the north-west frontier of India, to the increasing strength of the Turks who were being reinforced by regular troops from Constantinople, the failure of the Arabs to support us, and to lack of reinforcements, no offensive operations on a large scale could be considered by General Barrett. In addition, his force was short of aeroplanes and light draught gunboats.

25th November. General Barrett was instructed by the Chief of the General Staff in India to consolidate his position at Basra and at the head of the Persian Gulf. The *Espiègle* and *Odin* reconnoitred to within 3 miles of Qurna. The Turkish gunboat *Marmariss* was in the vicinity on the river, and also 500 Turks with two guns on land.

27th November. The Military Secretary at the India Office considered that an advance on Qurna would be desirable for the following reasons—

1. It would be safe to do this without any support from the Arabs as the third brigade to General Barrett's 6th Division was due to arrive within a week.
2. A forward move would have a good moral effect on the Arabs and on the Mohammedans in India.
3. The position at Qurna could be further secured by

warships in the river, which was navigable for ships of 15 ft. draught.

4. Qurna, with its flanks secured by the Hawiza marshes on the right and by the Euphrates on the left, was a strong strategical position, covering Persian Arabistan.

5. At Qurna it was possible to control the rich cultivated area along the Shatt-al-Arab.

6. By remaining passive at Basra the morale of the enemy would be raised.

28th November. The 16th Brigade arrived in the river. The 6th Division now consisted of an Indian Cavalry Regiment, 1 Field Brigade, R.A., consisting of 3 field batteries and an ammunition column, 1 Indian Mountain Brigade, R.A., consisting of 2 mountain batteries, two companies of sappers and miners, and one Divisional Signal company, one Troop of a Wireless Signal squadron, one Pioneer battalion, three Indian Infantry Brigades, each consisting of one British and three Indian battalions, two British field ambulances, three Indian field ambulances, a supply and transport Corps two Mule Corps, an Ordnance Field Park, a Field Veterinary section, and an Imperial Service Transport Corps, three Camel Corps.

29th November. General Barrett decided to secure his position at Basra by occupying Qurna and Shaiba (10 miles south-west of Basra).

30th November. A force consisting of two field guns, half a company sappers and miners, one company of British Infantry, and two battalions (Indian) were under orders to disembark at the northern bank of the River Shwaiyib at its junction with the Shatt-al-Arab in four steamers. Two warships and two armed launches were to accompany the force.

4th December. This force disembarked as ordered.

The Turks' position was located between Muzaira'a and the River Tigris.

The enemy were driven out of their entrenched position by 11.00 hours by the 110th Mahrattas, a company of Norfolks, and half a company of sappers and miners. The Turks then found excellent cover in the plantation between Qurna and Muzaira'a covered by their guns from the village of Qurna. However, they were driven out of their positions on the eastern bank of the river and retired to the western bank at Qurna. Our infantry lined the left bank of the Tigris. It was then seen that further artillery support would be

required to enable our troops to cross the River Tigris, which, east of Qurna, was 200 yds. wide. Such support was not possible, owing to the plantation on the east bank and owing to the launches on the river being under the enemy's gun and rifle fire; also the *Espiègle* was aground, the Tigris being only 7 ft. deep at low water.

Operations for crossing the River Tigris were, therefore, not carried out. The force withdrew, to camp at its original landing place on the north bank of the River Shwaiyib.

78 Turkish prisoners and 2 field guns were captured.

6th December. General Fry took command of the force on the River Shwaiyib. He was reinforced by two sections of field artillery.

The Turks reoccupied their position at Muzaira'a. Their advance across the plain towards our outposts was checked by our gun fire from the ships and from the shore.

7th December. General Fry was reinforced by a mountain battery and 300 mules.

His plan now was to clear the Turks from the left bank and then to advance to a position north of and out of view of Qurna.

From this point preparations would be made to cross the river.

The Turks were estimated at approximately 3,000 strong in the vicinity of Qurna and Muzaira'a.

Our advance was made on a three-battalion front, with two battalions in reserve.

The attack started at 11.00 hours. Two hours later the Muzaira'a position was captured at the point of the bayonet by four battalions closely supported by the artillery. The Turks then occupied a position north of Muzaira'a in the plantation. Two of our battalions pushed on to the river bank and here were received with heavy fire from the Turks in Qurna. Our ships now reached a position 2,000 yds. from the Turks.

Their fire diverted the Turks' fire from the infantry and saved casualties.

8th December. A reconnaissance was made early up the left bank by one battalion, and two battalions moved into the plantation opposite Qurna, where a flying bridge was to be constructed.

At 11.30 hours a small party swam across the Tigris at the site selected for the flying bridge.

They were able to fix up a flying bridge, and the 110th Mahrattas were able to cross the river. By 14.00 hours the 104th and a section of a mountain battery had also crossed the river.

A general advance in a southerly direction was made by the two battalions. The Turks were in position in trenches at right angles to the river north of Qurna ready to meet them. It was, therefore, decided that it was too late to make an organized attack as the whole force was not available to support it. Accordingly, the troops on the right bank of the River Tigris fell back to form a bridge-head. The Norfolks occupied a position on the left of the river on the opposite side to the bridge-head.

9th December. At 08.30 hours the Turks made an unconditional surrender to General Fry.

45 officers and 989 men were made prisoners; also 4 guns were surrendered.

A garrison of two squadrons, two batteries, a company of sappers and miners, and an infantry brigade were left at Qurna. Owing to the excellent co-operation between the Navy and the 6th Division an important strategical position had been won, as it dominated the Turks' main line of approach to the Persian Gulf, and threatened their communications with the lower Euphrates.

We were able to protect the oil pipe-line, and we had gained the allegiance of the Shaikh of Mohammerah.

It was now considered that it would be advisable to occupy Nasiriya and Amara in order to secure our position before the Turkish 4th Corps could reach either of these positions.

GENERAL SUMMARY

1915

During the first three months of this year the Turks were not aggressive. In March the strength of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force became an army corps by adding to it the 12th Indian Division. General Sir J. Nixon took over the command of this corps from General Sir A. Barrett. General Townshend then commanded the 6th Division. During April the Turks became more active, but their operations were unsuccessful. General Nixon then decided to occupy Amara. General Townshend with the close co-operation of the Navy, and by the use of water transport to add to the

mobility of his 6th Division occupied this place by the 3rd June, and captured 1,800 Turks and 17 guns. General Nixon now decided to occupy Nasiriya on the River Euphrates. This was accomplished on the 25th July with a loss to the enemy of 1,000 prisoners and 17 guns. This battle of Qurna was fought in bellums over flooded marshes in a temperature of 113° in the shade. General Townshend was on board the *Espiègle* supported by the sloops *Clio*, *Odin*, *Lawrence*, and *Miner*, and two armed launches, *Shaitan* and *Lewis Pelly*, mine-sweeping ahead up the river. The Turks were driven back, and the flotilla followed up, shelling their gunboat *Marmaris*, which ran ashore and was abandoned. When 8 miles above Ezra's tomb the *Espiègle* and sloops were held up by their draught. Townshend boarded the *Comet* and pushed on up to Amara, where the Turks were so much demoralized that 1,000 men surrendered to the *Comet's* crew of 22. The original object of the campaign had now been achieved.

General Nixon now decided to advance up the River Tigris to Kut al Amara. This decision was sanctioned by the Commander-in-Chief in India. Accordingly, early in August, the 6th Division began its advance from Amara. On the 15th September General Townshend drove an advanced force of Turks from their position 15 miles east of Kut. On the 28th September the Turks were again defeated at Es Sina, with a loss to them of 1,630 prisoners and 13 guns. Kut was then occupied, and the Turks were pursued by the cavalry up to Aziziya.

Townshend was now in a position of considerable strategical importance. At Kut he was in touch with the troops at Nasiriya via the River Hai, which in addition provided a rich source of food supply if developed. It was also an important point on the Turkish lines of communication between Nasiriya or Amara and Baghdad. General Nixon now intimated that he could open a road to Baghdad, but he stated that with his available troops he could not hold it unless he was reinforced by two divisions. The Government were anxious to place a success against the failures in Gallipoli. The Viceroy considered that our prestige in the East would be increased if we occupied Baghdad.

General Nixon was accordingly told that he might advance on the city. Orders were then sent to General Townshend to push on to Baghdad. His advance began from Aziziya

on the 11th November after he had organized his supply services and had built up a depôt at this place.

On arrival near Ctesiphon Townshend found that the Turks were stronger than he expected them to be, and that they were expecting reinforcements.

However, he attacked them successfully on the 21st November. His losses were so heavy, owing to enemy counter-attacks with fresh reinforcements brought into the battle, that on the 25th he began to withdraw. The Turks in force gained contact with his rearguard on the 29th November, and on the following day attacked vigorously. General Townshend was able to drive back the enemy and to continue his retreat to Kut, which was reached on the 3rd December. General Nixon decided that General Townshend's division must remain in Kut, in spite of the fact that by doing so it was bound to be invested. This happened by the 8th December, when Kut was hemmed in on all sides.

Field-Marshal von der Goltz realized that it would be necessary to make an early effort to capture our besieged garrison, otherwise his task would be to guard against the attacks of a relief force. Accordingly, he ordered General Nur-ed-Din, who had four divisions at his disposal, to make an assault. Assaults were accordingly delivered on the 10th, 11th, and 12th December on the narrow land front at the northern end of the loop, on the left bank of the River Tigris in which Kut was situated. Nur-ed-Din's attacks were successfully repulsed with loss.

Then Nur-ed-Din moved part of his force down the river to positions which were fortified. In these strong positions between the River Tigris and the Suwaiqiya Marsh his plan was to await the attacks of any relieving force, while our troops in Kut were blockaded.

During the middle of December the 7th and 3rd Indian Divisions began to arrive from France. They were sent up the Shatt-al-Arab and on to Amara as they arrived.

General Aylmer commanded the relief force.

1915

1st January. A Turkish force was reported to be at Muzaibila (on the right bank of the River Tigris, 9 miles north of Qurna).

A small force was sent out to attack the Turks in the

reported position. The *Espiègle* and the *Blosse Lynch* accompanied this force.

On arrival at Muzaibila the Turks were seen to be encamped $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther north.

As there was an obstruction in the River Tigris which would have prevented co-operation with the *Espiègle* and *Blosse Lynch*, the Commander of the Force decided not to advance against the Turkish position. A withdrawal was consequently made to Qurna.

5th January. Reconnaissance carried out from Qurna revealed that the hostile tribesmen, reported to be collecting at Nasiriya, would be unlikely to attack Qurna from the west owing to the Hammar lake being impassable for steamers drawing over 3 ft. of water, and owing to the River Shwaiyib being too narrow for navigation by small steamers.

6th January. A small force of the enemy at Allawi (35 miles west of Basra) was easily dispersed by a column sent out from Shaiba.

9th January. General Barrett applied to India for more aeroplanes to facilitate reconnaissance.

15th January. The Political Officer with the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force urged by telegram an advance to Amara and Nasiriya on political, administrative, and commercial grounds. The Indian Government, however, considered that we had not sufficient transport to carry out this advance, and also to hold our line of communication.

20th January. A force consisting of a cavalry regiment, a battery and two sections of field artillery, a mountain battery, a company of sappers and miners, an infantry brigade, the Norfolk regiment, and two companies of the 7th Rajputs advanced towards the Turkish position held by 5,000 Turks in the vicinity of Ruta (8 miles north of Qurna). The *Espiègle*, *Miner*, and *Mejidieh* were to co-operate from the river.

Our leading troops advanced to within approximately 1,000 yds. of Ruta Creek.

This creek was a considerable obstacle, which our troops had no means of crossing.

Our further advance would have led to heavy casualties from the enemy's frontal and enfilade fire, as our troops were knee deep in mud and water. A withdrawal was consequently ordered. Our force returned to Muzaira'a camp by 14.00 hours.

Our casualties were 58. The Turks also withdrew from Ruta. Their further advance in a southerly direction was consequently checked, and the Arab raids and sniping were stopped.

26th January. Reports were now received that Basra was likely to be attacked from the east and from the west. The numbers at Ezra's Tomb were reported to have been increased, and to be likely to attack the Qurna garrison.

Turks were also reported to be moving towards Ahwaz from Amara.

The Government of India consequently decided to send out the 12th Infantry Brigade to Basra. General Barrett sent up H.M.S. *Comet* with an infantry detachment of 30 men of the Dorsets up the River Karun.

30th January. Before dawn 300 Turks attacked our lines at Muzaira'a without success.

General Barrett decided to send the 7th Rajputs to Ahwaz.

At Basra and Shaiba now the garrison was reduced to two squadrons, two batteries and four battalions and one company.

4th February. The Viceroy of India visited Basra.

He recommended that we should advance to Amara and Nasinya. The enemy now were posted as follows—

Near Amara were 4,000.

Near Qurna were 5,000 with 17 guns.

Near Ahwaz were 700 with 2 guns.

Near Nasiriya were two fire brigade battalions.

800 Arabs and 6 guns.

General Barrett considered that he could deal with the situation with his present available forces, namely, with 3 brigades round Qurna, a brigade at Basra, a cavalry brigade at Shaiba, and a battalion at Ahwaz.

11th February. The garrison at Ahwaz was reinforced on receipt of information that strong bodies of the enemy were on the Karkha river.

17th February. The floods round Qurna made the country in the vicinity a sea of mud. It was therefore decided to withdraw the bulk of the troops to Basra.

A force of approximately 4,500 with 6 guns was reported to be advancing on Shaiba from Nukhaila (15 miles north-west of Shaiba).

19th February. General Delamain with a movable column marched out from Basra to attack the Turks reported to be about Nukhaila.

20th February. General Delamain's force reached Shwaibda. The enemy were now reported to be holding a strongly entrenched position south-east of Nukhaila, with a stronger force than had been formerly reported.

21st February. General Delamain decided to withdraw back to Basra in view of the enemy's superior numbers, the strength of his position, and owing to the heavy rain having turned the desert into deep mud.

24th February. Owing to increased enemy activity round Shaiba the garrison of this place was increased. General Delamain was ordered to occupy it with a brigade (less a battalion), a field battery, and the 6th Cavalry Brigade, which was now to be organized and was to consist of three Indian cavalry regiments and a horse artillery battery.

3rd March. A force was sent from Shaiba to reconnoitre towards Mukhaila. This force consisted of two cavalry regiments, two sections of horse artillery, supported by half a battalion and a section of field artillery. The commander of the infantry and field artillery took up a position 4 miles west of Shaiba. The cavalry went forward to within 4 miles of Nukhaila. The withdrawal began at 14.00 hours. The enemy then made full use of their mobility by trying to envelop the flanks of our cavalry. They were checked by our fire and by counter-attacks during the withdrawal until the vicinity of Barjisiya Wood was reached. Here a fresh body of horsemen charged in to close quarters. They were joined by those who had already begun to retire. Our cavalry were outnumbered, the heavy sand impeded the progress of the guns and our supporting infantry, who at this critical time were close at hand, could not distinguish in the clouds of dust formed by the opposing horsemen who were the enemy and who were our own Indian cavalry. It was not until the enemy charged right at our infantry that they could open fire. This, however, they did most effectively with guns, machine guns, and rifles. The enemy were completely surprised, and turned at once on meeting our steady fire. Our column now withdrew back to Shaiba. Our casualties were 25, and one machine gun was lost.

Our force at Ahwaz was also engaged on this day. A Turkish camp was located 10 miles north-west of Ahwaz.

Our commander at Ahwaz decided to attack the Turks at this camp before they could be reinforced. His force, consisting of two troops of Indian cavalry, one section of field

artillery, one section of mountain artillery, six companies of Indian infantry, and twenty rifles of the Dorsetshire regiment, reached a position about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the enemy's camp before dawn. The enemy in large numbers began to press round both flanks. The Commander of the force decided to retire. This withdrawal became disorganized owing to the close pressure by the enemy on both flanks. The cavalry, gunners, and Dorsets continually drove back the Turks, who, however, were not finally repulsed until they were located on a hill 5 miles from Ahwaz, waiting for our withdrawing troops.

A combined attack was made against the enemy by the cavalry round their flank, and by the infantry led by the Dorsets against their front. The enemy were driven off this hill. Troops now came from our camp at Ahwaz and drove back the remaining enemy who were harassing our retreat. Our casualties were 189. The enemy had about 900 casualties.

General Barrett now sent up a reinforcement to Ahwaz of a section of field artillery and half a battalion of Indian infantry.

The enemy's mobility and power to manœuvre and act with rapidity in this country were again exemplified in this action.

In order to protect Basra adequately an advance to Nasiriya and Amara seemed to be essential.

4th March. In India the situation was not improving. Mohammedan troops in some parts of India seemed to be uncertain in their attitude towards us. There was unrest on the north-west frontier, and desertions among the trans-frontier Pathans. Hindu troops could not be spared. General Barrett had 14,000 and 40 guns between Basra and Ahwaz. Further dissipation of force was inadvisable in view of the enemy's strength, and the lack of transport which limited his power of manœuvre to a dangerous extent.

7th March. The 33rd Infantry Brigade and a howitzer battery were placed under orders to proceed from India to Mesopotamia.

10th March. The 10th Infantry Brigade in Egypt was placed under orders to reinforce the army in Mesopotamia.

12th March. Our armed flotilla, consisting of two river steamers, a tug, a motor boat, and a barge with detachments of British and Indian infantry, gun detachments, and sappers shelled the Turkish camp at Nukhaila.

25th March. Three battalions of the 33rd Infantry Brigade, with a company of sappers and miners, arrived at Basra.

6th April. The 30th Infantry Brigade of 3 battalions reached Basra.

9th April. General Nixon arrived in Basra to take command of the 2nd Indian Army Corps. This consisted of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, i.e. 7th Lancers, and 16th Cavalry and a Horse Artillery Battery; the 6th Poona Division (16th, 17th, 18th Brigades); the 12th Indian Division (12th, 30th, 33rd Brigades) and Corps Troops (Wireless Signal Troop, Bridging Train, Printing and Litho sections).

The Turkish plans now appeared to be to make an attack simultaneously against our troops on the River Karun with their division at Ghadir and against Basra from the west with their cavalry brigade and two divisions on the Euphrates.

General Nixon was now advised to take the offensive as soon as he had sufficient transport.

This was in accordance with General Nixon's own ideas of taking the offensive against the Turks whenever they came within reach and before they could concentrate in strength.

11th April. General Fry, commanding the troops at Shaiba, consisting of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, a Field Brigade, R.A., less a battery and one gun of another battery, a mountain battery, the 18th Infantry Brigade, less 1 battalion, a Pioneer battalion, two companies of sappers and miners, less one section, a Divisional Signal Company, less one section and a Wireless Troop, reported that the Turks, 12,000 strong with 12 field guns and 10,000 Arabs, intended to attack Shaiba trenches from the north and south, and the Shaiba Fort from the south-west.

12th April. At 05.00 hours the Turkish attacks started. At sunrise the Turkish guns came into action. Their infantry attacked against the south salient as far north as Kiln Post. This attack was repulsed, but the enemy entrenched themselves about a mile from our trenches.

The enemy infantry made continuous frontal attacks on both flanks without success. Our casualties were 71, in repulsing these assaults.

13th April. The 16th Brigade captured North Mound by 11.00 hours. This brigade was reinforced and then advanced in a south-westerly direction, pivoting on North Mound.

The Turkish trenches in our front were then cleared with the bayonet. At 15.00 hours our troops withdrew to camp. South Mound, 2 miles from camp, was still strongly held by the enemy.

14th April. An advance was made against the Turks holding South Mound. The cavalry gained touch with the enemy a mile north-west of South Mound, and then followed up their retreating cavalry to a position half-way between South Mound and the Watch Tower, while our infantry occupied South Mound. The Turkish main body now withdrew to Barjisiya Wood. The further plan of attack was to engage the enemy's right and centre with the 16th Brigade, and their left with the 18th Brigade in co-operation with the cavalry, who would threaten the enemy's line of retreat to Nukhaila. The fighting developed into a frontal attack on the whole front, owing to the difficulty of locating the enemy's flanks and owing to their left flank resting on the flooded area north of Barjisiya Wood.

The Turks' front line was attacked and captured by 17.00 hours. The garrison of their second line put up the white flag and surrendered. The enemy in Barjisiya Wood were also about to withdraw, but owing to the lateness of the hour it was decided not to advance and make a fresh attack. Our withdrawal to Shaiba started at 18.00 hours.

Arabs harassed the Turk's retreat, which was continued until Khamisiya was reached.

15th April. The Euphrates blockade flotilla proceeded towards Nukhaila.

17th April. The flotilla advanced to Ghabishiya (45 miles north-west of Basra).

General Nixon now decided to concentrate a striking force at Basra, leaving the cavalry brigade, less 1 regiment, the 18th Infantry Brigade, and a Pioneer battalion in camp near Zubair.

Our victory at Barjisiya disorganized the Turks' local fighting forces, cleared the western approaches to Basra, and restored the initiative to our force.

General Nixon now decided to concentrate troops under General Gorringe, commanding the 12th Division, in the direction of Ahwaz, in order to ensure the future security of the pipe-line.

22nd April. General Townshend arrived at Basra to command the 6th Division.

27th April. The force for operations in Arabistan under General Gorringe reached Braika (60 miles north-east of Basra). This force was composed of the 6th Cavalry, 30th, 12th Infantry Brigades, and divisional troops, making a total of 12,500 of all ranks.

1st May. General Melliss took out a reconnaissance force from Braika, consisting of the 30th Brigade, a field battery, R.A., and the 6th Cavalry Brigade. He formed an advanced depôt for supplies and a base for offensive operations at Ibn Husain, where supplies for ten days were collected. A Turkish force was now reported to be at Illa (20 miles north-west of Ahwaz).

4th May. General Melliss's force concentrated at his advanced base.

6th May. During the night of 6/7th May an advance was made on Illa.

7th May. A crossing was made over the River Karkha close to Illa, in spite of the river being in full flood with a strong current. The width of the river at the point of crossing was 250 yds., the banks were steep, and the soil was clay. In addition a gale blew all day. The crossing, however, was unopposed, and during the day 5 companies of infantry were able to cross and entrench themselves on the right bank of the river.

Cavalry during the day made demonstrations to divert the Turks' attention from the actual point of crossing.

13th May. The whole force had by this day crossed the river. Ten days' supplies were stored at Illa. The Turks were reported to be at Khafajiya.

14th May. General Gorringe, with a column consisting of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, a maxim battery, 30th Infantry Brigade (less 2 battalions) and a Field Battery advanced along the northern bank of the River Karkha.

On the southern bank General Lean commanded a column consisting of 2 battalions, a company of sappers and miners, and a Pioneer company.

General Lean's column had advanced slowly owing to the physical difficulties encountered as the country was intersected by numerous creeks and marshes. General Gorringe sent the infantry and artillery of his column under General Melliss forward down the River Karkha to seize boats for operations next day against Khafajiya in co-operation with General Lean. The Arabs on General Melliss's front were

driven back to a point opposite the Shaikh's fort at Khafajiya. The Arabs' attempt to turn our right flank was checked by the fire of the horse artillery. In the evening troops withdrew to bivouac about 5 miles from Khafajiya.

15th May. The River Karkha was crossed by half a battalion of the 76th Punjabis. This crossing was possible owing to the accurate rifle and artillery covering fire. General Lean's advance was very slow, owing to the numerous water-cuts which had to be bridged.

19th May. General Lean's column joined up with the 76th Punjabis. Punitive measures against the Arabs were taken. General Gorrington continued to carry out demonstrations towards Amara for the next fourteen days.

28th May. General Gorrington's force advanced to Bisaitin (50 miles north-west of Ahwaz). He sent his cavalry 10 miles north-west of Bisaitin to Umm Chir to endeavour to locate the Turkish forces, who had, however, withdrawn to Amara.

29th May. General Gorrington moved back to Illa.

31st May. General Townshend made a combined frontal and turning attack against the Turks north of Qurna in the vicinity of Norfolk Hill, One Tower Hill, and Gun Hill. The attack was to be supported by the Naval flotilla and by five heavy and field guns in barges. The frontal attack was made by the 17th Brigade (less a battalion) in bellums against the enemy on Norfolk, One Tower, and Gun Hills, while the turning attack was to be made by a battalion, also in bellums, with one section of mountain battery and half a company of sappers and miners against the enemy on One Tree Hill. The troops making the turning movement captured their objective by 06.30 hours in spite of the fact that their bellums grounded, and they had to wade through shallow water. Norfolk Hill was captured by 07.30 hours. Covered by artillery and machine gun fire, the Oxfords left their bellums 100 yds. from their objective and made a final successful assault. All efforts were now concentrated for the capture of One Tower Hill. The Oxfords re-embarked in their bellums and supported by the *Espiègle* and *Clio*, which moved up alongside Norfolk Hill, successfully assaulted the western flank of their objective.

By 09.30 hours One Tower Hill had been captured. At this time the 103rd Mahrattas were a mile south of Shrapnel Hill.

Although they were forced to advance slowly in the reeds, and although the enemy could see them, and they were unable to locate the Turks, yet they worked their way gradually forward towards Gun Hill, and captured it by 11.30 hours, together with a Turkish officer, 132 Arab soldiers, and 2 guns.

These advanced positions had thus been easily captured. This was due to our resolute advance, to excellent covering fire, and to the fact that these Turkish positions were difficult to reinforce, and it was not easy to withdraw from them.

At 16.00 hours General Townshend issued orders for the next day's attack. A frontal attack was to be carried out by the Royal Naval flotilla and the artillery, commencing at 05.00 hours. The 17th Brigade was to make an enveloping attack to the west of the Abu Aran ridge from Gun Hill at 05.45 hours. The 16th Brigade was to support the 17th Brigade and later to make a frontal attack along the Abu Aran ridge towards Muzaibila, while the 17th Brigade continued its enveloping movement.

1st June. Abu Aran was found to be evacuated. By 11.00 hours this village was occupied by the 17th Brigade.

Townshend then ordered the 17th Brigade to embark and proceed up stream. The *Espiègle*, with General Townshend on board, followed by the *Clio* and *Odin*, started in pursuit of the enemy up the river. At 20.00 hours the ships anchored.

2nd June. At 02.00 hours the pursuit was continued. At 04.00 hours the *Espiègle* ran aground. General Townshend then transferred to H.M.S. *Comet*, and proceeded up the river, followed by the *Sumana*, *Shaitan*, *Lewis Pelly*, and three boats, each containing a 4.7 in. gun. At 19.00 hours they anchored at Qala Salih (13 miles north north-west of Qurna). Our 16th Brigade arrived just in time to secure the town of Amara, as the Turks were beginning to recover their morale after their surprise of the previous day.

4th June. The 16th Brigade reached Qala Salih at 01.00 hours, and five hours later received orders to push on to Amara.

In this operation we took 2,000 prisoners and 17 guns. Amara was an important point, for from it runs a desert road a hundred miles long to Ahwaz on the River Karun.

The bulk of General Townshend's force was now gradually concentrated at Amara, detachments being left to hold

Ezra's tomb and Qala Salih as posts on the lines of communication.

The *Comet* and *Shaitan* were left at Amara. The rest of the naval flotilla withdrew downstream.

13th June. The Mesopotamia force was now disposed in four main groups—at Amara, Qurna, Ahwaz, and Basra. At Amara was the H.Q. of the 6th Division, also a cavalry regiment, 10 guns, 9 battalions, half a battalion of pioneers, two companies of sappers and miners. At Ahwaz were two cavalry regiments, 12 guns, 4 infantry battalions, a company of pioneers, and a company of sappers and miners. At Basra and in its vicinity were a cavalry regiment, 6 guns, 5 infantry battalions, a company of pioneers, and a company of sappers and miners.

Opposed to our troops were 10 battalions and 12 guns at Amara, and up the Tigris were a cavalry regiment, 9 guns, and the remnants of 12 battalions. In addition the Turks had 7 battalions and a few guns at Nasiriya, and 4 battalions at Baghdad. The Russians were engaging the Turks in Armenia and in the vicinity of Lake Van.

In Aden we were holding our position defensively; in Gallipoli we were unable to advance. In India there was disaffection on the north-west frontier. In Persia there were considerable German activities, so that it might be necessary to reinforce Bushire at short notice.

General Nixon now began to make preparations for an advance to Nasiriya, and to open up relations with the Arabs in that neighbourhood, and to secure the Euphrates portion of the Basra vilayet.

An advance later to Kut, it was considered, would enable us to hold both ends of the Shatt-al-Hai; also it would add to our prestige greatly in regard to the tribes on the Tigris.

The General Staff in India considered that Kut would be an advantageous position on which to base a further advance on Baghdad; and that a British force there was well placed strategically to protect the Basra vilayet from any Turkish advance from Baghdad, and to restrict Turkish traffic between Baghdad and Nasiriya by river.

16th June. General Gorringe was entrusted with the conduct of operations towards Nasiriya.

His force consisted of an infantry brigade, 1 field and 1 mountain battery, half a company of pioneers, 3 sections of a company of sappers and miners, a section Divisional

Signal company, a wireless section, a field ambulance and supply units; and a naval flotilla was to co-operate with him.

27th June. The naval flotilla moved across the Hammar Lake. There was great difficulty in getting the vessels through the channel and dam of this lake.

3rd July. By the evening of this day all the river craft had passed the obstruction in the channel.

An advanced post was established at Kumait by the 6th Division, 28 miles north of Amara.

5th July. General Gorrings's plan was to advance on both banks of the Akaka and to make his main attack on the left bank of the Euphrates. The 76th Punjabis on the north bank of the Euphrates made good progress in their bellums for $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours after their start at 04.45 hours until they came within 800 yds. of the enemy's position behind mud walls near Ati's House. When they were checked the advance was continued about 10.00 hours by the 24th Punjabis wading through the water. When the 76th Punjabis came up into line with them and the advance of both battalions was supported by artillery fire, the Turks in the forward trenches surrendered.

6th July. Turks in Suq-ash-Shuyukh (15 miles south-east of Nasiriya) surrendered.

The naval flotilla reconnoitred up the Euphrates, followed by troops in river steamers.

The enemy were now located near the Majirina creek and in an obstruction 2,000 yds. below this creek, where the Turks had sunk two steamers.

General Gorrings decided to halt in the Asani bend, and to reconnoitre the enemy's position, which was reported as being held in force with some 4,000 Turks and 4 guns. Our force was 1,900 rifles.

7th July. In the reconnaissance made by our troops it was found that the enemy was strongly entrenched on both banks of the river. General Gorrings, therefore, sent 1 battalion and half a Pioneer battalion during the night to occupy an advanced position along the near bank of the Sabiyan creek, in order to stop the enemy from blocking the river, and to cover artillery positions selected for the British guns.

8th July. The enemy holding the position was estimated at 2,000 with 8 guns. During the night two battalions moved up the right bank of the River Euphrates.

11th July. After four days of reconnaissance of the enemy's positions and the approaches to them, the enemy's positions were located accurately.

12th July. Two half-battalions of the 12th Infantry Brigade reinforced General Gorringe. The enemy's attacks on our outposts during the night were repulsed without difficulty.

13th July. Two more half-battalions arrived to reinforce General Gorringe.

He now decided to advance his position on the right bank of the River Euphrates up to Shukhair and Sixteen Palms in order to gain a position from which he could attack the enemy's communications. General Melliss with 3 battalions and half a Pioneer battalion and 4 mountain guns was ordered to carry out this operation.

14th July. This operation was successfully carried out.

15th July. Colonel Climo, commanding the 24th Punjabis and 4 mountain guns, started at 00.45 hours to occupy some sandhills a mile north-west of Shukhair. This operation had to be carried out slowly in bellums with the guns on rafts, as progress through the reeds was very difficult. As soon as it was light the troops waded through the muddy water, 4 ft. deep in places, and were able to reach a position 250 yds. of the sandhills. The enemy were not surprised, and were able to bring frontal and enfilade fire to bear on our troops. Colonel Climo then ordered a withdrawal back to the guns. This was accomplished with difficulty, as the enemy closed in and harassed our flanks. By 10.00 hours we had got back to our starting-point.

The Turks now withdrew troops from their left flank to reinforce their positions on the right bank of the river.

General Gorringe decided again to postpone his main attack, and to wait for further reinforcements, as the Turks were estimated to be over 5,000 strong with 10 guns.

20th July. Reinforcements, namely, the bulk of the 18th Infantry Brigade, arrived.

Our advanced post at Kumait was evacuated, and a river column consisting of an Indian battalion in two steamers and a launch with two gunboats was substituted for this post.

24th July. General Gorringe's plan was to capture the enemy's advanced trenches on both banks. The 30th Infantry Brigade was to capture the enemy's works beyond the

Majinina creek. The 12th Infantry Brigade was to capture the Maiyadiya Creek, supported by the covering fire of the troops on the right bank and by a field battery.

The reserve, consisting of two battalions, was to assemble south of the Atabiga creek.

The attack started at 05.30 hours. By 06.40 hours on the left bank Thorneycroft Point, held by 1,700 men with 6 guns, had been captured, and the advance from this point on to Maiyadiya Creek was begun.

At this time General Melliss's brigade on the right bank started to advance on a two-battalion front, supported by three gunboats and an armoured barge. By 10.00 hours this brigade had crossed the Majinina Creek, and had captured the abandoned Turkish position, held by 1,500 Turks with 5 guns, north of the creek. The pursuit, owing to lack of land transport, was slow.

By 13.00 hours the 30th Brigade was only 2,000 yds. north of the Majinina Creek owing, in addition to lack of transport, to the difficult nature of the country, and owing to the great heat. At this time on the left bank the 12th Brigade was slightly ahead of the 30th Brigade on the opposite bank in touch with the Turks on their front. About 4 p.m. it was reported that the enemy, estimated at 1,000 rifles and 4 guns, was retiring from their Sadanawiya position.

General Gorringe, therefore, issued orders for the forces on both banks to advance, while the H.M.S. *Shushan* and H.M.S. *Mejidieh* closely supported the advance. This offensive operation caused the enemy to withdraw. The Norfolks occupied the Turks' Sadanawiya position (4 miles from Nasiriya) with the 30th Brigade in line with them on the south bank.

25th July. At 06.00 hours the Arab citizens from Nasiriya invited the commander of H.M.S. *Shushan* to occupy the town.

General Melliss then, with 100 Gurkhas and three gunboats, proceeded to Nasiriya.

Later in the day the 12th and 30th Brigades marched up to the town while the 18th Brigade held the communications.

Nasiriya was an important centre of the warlike Arab Muntafik tribe.

30th July. An advance was made from Amara with a column in steamers.

31st July. General Delamain's steamer column reached

Ali Gharbi escorted by two gunboats. The Turks were now reported to be at Shaikh Saad. General Delamain concentrated at Ali Gharbi three battalions, one troop of cavalry, a field battery, and a section of heavy guns.

At Amara were the headquarters of the 6th Division, a regiment of cavalry, a field battery, and six heavy guns and three battalions. On the River Tigris were one battalion at Qala Salih and one half-battalion at Qurna. At Ahwaz were two cavalry regiments and a horse artillery battery. One battalion was en route for Bushire. At Basra were two squadrons and a mountain battery.

The Turks had a weak division at Kut and another withdrawing to this place from Nasiriya. At Baghdad they had a weak reserve division. Their total numbers at these places was 21 guns and 9,700 rifles.

General Nixon now considered that we ought to concentrate our striking force at Kut. Here we should cover Nasiriya, and therefore be able to reduce the garrison there. If the Turks advanced in force on Nasiriya while we were at Kut it would be possible for us to make a counter-stroke on Baghdad. We should deprive the enemy of two alternative lines of operation, and would be enabled to concentrate on a single line.

Politically it would be advantageous, as we should be able to interpose our force between the Turks and the Arab Beni Lam tribe. We could also obtain supplies from the Hai and prevent the Turks from getting them. On the other hand, it would extend our communications by 153 miles, thus adding to our difficulties of reinforcement and supply.

Our forces would have to defeat Nur-ud-Din's force in the vicinity of Kut. For this operation General Nixon might have ten battalions and 30 guns when the Nasiriya operations were concluded.

The Viceroy considered that the occupation of Kut would enable us to consolidate our position in Mesopotamia.

13th August. General Nixon telegraphed that he could only undertake further operations up the River Tigris if the Bawi tribe was subsidized to protect the oil pipe-line.

He considered that if this subsidy was given he "would sever German communications with Persia, both road and telegraphic, and also the channel through which money reaches them, enabling them to make lavish disbursements in support of intrigues in Persia." To enable us to hold

Baghdad, if the advance was to be as far forward as this place, a division as reinforcement would be required.

16th August. Dilwar fort near Bushire was destroyed by our detachment at Bushire. This detachment consisted of a squadron of cavalry and a battalion. General Brooking now took command of the detachment at Bushire. Russian troops were landed at Enzeli on the Caspian Sea. The situation at this time in Afghanistan was precarious. Although the Amir professed neutrality, yet he entertained a German mission at Kabul. Owing to the failure of the Suvla operations, the situation in the Dardanelles was critical. The Viceroy, therefore, thought that the capture by us of Baghdad would have a great moral effect in the Middle East.

30th August. General Nixon reported that, unless unfavourable contingencies intervened, an early advance on Baghdad was desirable. If, however, he was to hold this place, reinforcements would be required to secure ourselves there and to deal with any Persian interference. General Townshend had expressed his willingness to follow the enemy up to Baghdad if he was able to rout them at Kut.

General Townshend's plan was to take advantage of the enemy's dissemination of force on both banks of the River Tigris, and to make his main attack against the Turks on the left bank. He could thus hope to concentrate superior numbers at the decisive point. If he could pursue to Baghdad he would then reconnoitre up the river with the naval flotilla, and he would bring his division up to Ctesiphon.

1st September. Concentration of the 6th Division at Ali Gharbi began.

2nd September. The 30th Brigade became lines of communication troops between Amara and Kut. Thus the whole of the 6th Division was available for offensive action. Owing to hostile activity in Persia, it was considered desirable to push on to Kut as early as possible, in order to add to our prestige.

11th September. The three infantry Brigades (16th, 17th and 18th) were now concentrated at Ali Gharbi.

General Gorringe assumed command of the Lines of Communication Defence troops with headquarters at Amara. General Nixon also made his headquarters at this place.

16th September. The 6th Division reached Sannaiyat. The Turkish position was 8 miles from this place. The naval

flotilla accompanying General Townshend was under Commander Cookson. It consisted of the *Comet*, *Shaitan*, and *Sumara*, and four 4·7 in. guns in horseboats.

General Townshend sent back his shipping to Amara to bring up two field batteries and his supplies.

25th September. General Townshend's shipping returned and his whole force was now concentrated at Sannaiyat. This force included two battalions of the 30th Brigade from the L. of C. His strength now was 11,000 rifles, 28 guns, and 40 machine guns.

General Nixon arrived at Sannaiyat.

26th September. The River Tigris was bridged at Nukhailat out of view of troops in the Turkish positions.

An Indian battalion was sent up river on the right bank in order to mislead the enemy as to the main direction of our attack, which was to be against the Turks' left flank. The Turks were estimated at approximately 6,000 with 38 guns.

General Fry's column, consisting of a field battery, a section of a field howitzer battery, a sapper company, the 18th Infantry Brigade, and a Pioneer battalion, during the hours of darkness, moved up to a position of readiness.

27th September. Early in the morning General Fry's column advanced to make a preparatory attack against the centre of the enemy's position about the Horse Shoe Marsh.

General Delamain was to make the decisive attack against the Turkish left. Early in the afternoon the 18th Brigade was in position 2,000 yds. from the Turks. During the afternoon and evening the 16th and part of the 30th Brigades demonstrated on the right bank. No opposition was encountered on this flank.

The 16th Brigade withdrew to camp, leaving the 30th Brigade to hold the trenches made to cover the bridge-head near Nukhailat. Our 4 in. and 5 in. heavy guns were landed on the left bank, and posted within 6,700 yds. of the centre of the Turkish position. General Delamain's infantry was concentrated near Clery's Post, except for 2 battalions of the 30th Brigade remaining on the right bank of the River Tigris.

28th September. By 04.45 hours General Delamain's column reached its position of deployment just south-west of the Suwaiqiya marsh. General Hoghton's force with 6 battalions was to make an enveloping movement round the Turks' northern flank, while General Delamain made a frontal

attack with 1½ battalions supported by 3 field batteries. Cavalry were to operate on General Hoghton's northern flank. General Hoghton's column, however, lost their way and marched between the Suwaikiya and Ataba marshes.

As his column was advancing south, having marched round the northern end of the Ataba Marsh, an unlocated redoubt was detected 2 miles west of the marsh.

The 104th Rifles were directed to attack this redoubt, supported by 2 guns and the machine guns of the other battalions. This position was captured by a bayonet charge and 1 officer and 111 men surrendered by 09.10 hours.

General Hoghton then pushed on to attack the Northern Redoubt in co-operation with General Delamain, who had also started at 08.45 hours to attack this position.

This position was fifty minutes later in our hands, when another battalion was attacking the rear of the enemy's Centre Redoubt. Advance was now difficult owing to the mirage, the difficulty of artillery co-operation, and enemy's counter-attacks and stout resistance in and from their deep communication trenches.

By 08.30 hours the right of the 18th Infantry Brigade was 1,500 yds. from the enemy's trenches north of the Horse Shoe Marsh. General Townshend had gained little information as to the movements in his front. It was not until this time that he heard that the 17th Brigade was west of the Ataba Marsh and north of the enemy's left flank, and that General Delamain was attacking the central and northern redoubts. General Fry was ordered not to make a decisive attack until the enemy in his front was affected by the action of General Delamain's and General Hoghton's columns. By 10.40 hours General Fry reported that some 300 of the enemy had taken up a position on the right bank of the river to enfilade his brigade. The naval flotilla then co-operated successfully and advanced up the river and fired on these Turkish troops and forced them to withdraw.

It was not until 13.45 hours that General Townshend heard that General Delamain was in possession of the whole of the enemy's position south of the Suwada Marsh. It was at this time that General Townshend also heard that hostile reinforcements were moving from the south-west towards the Horse Shoe Marsh.

These bodies of the enemy caused General Delamain to change the direction of his advance with the 16th and 17th

Brigades, supported by 3 field batteries and 1 maxim battery. Our artillery was able to support the infantry and to silence the enemy's artillery. The Turks, however, took up a position along a dry canal running north-west from the Tigris. In this position they had an excellent field of fire for rifles and machine guns. Our infantry made a frontal attack and drove the enemy from their positions before nightfall. General Fry at the same time advanced against the enemy in his front and gained a position within 500 yds. of the Turks' front-line trenches.

29th September. Our air force reported that the Turks had vacated their positions. General Townshend now allotted to General Fry, commanding the 18th Infantry Brigade, a field artillery brigade and half a company of sappers and miners to pursue the enemy, moving up the river in steamers behind the naval flotilla in conjunction with the cavalry pursuing up the left bank of the River Tigris. The difficulties of embarkation and then of navigation prevented our flotilla and troops in steamers from advancing more than 2 miles towards the vicinity of Kut.

1st October. Our cavalry were in touch with the enemy 40 miles above Kut.

The Turks had now reorganized their forces, and were retiring covered by strong rearguards of all arms.

3rd October. Our aircraft reported that the Turks were in an entrenched position on a 6-mile front with their right on the left bank of the River Tigris.

5th October. General Fry's column reached Aziziya. General Townshend decided to halt at this place for a time. During this fighting, from the 26th September, the Turks had lost 4,000 men and 14 guns. Our casualties had been just over 1,230. General Nixon was still very short of equipment, armament, and transport. Only old-pattern Nordenfeldt machine guns had been sent out to him; he had only three Martinsyde aeroplanes and two seaplanes at this battle of Kut, only 27 steamers, and two armoured cars, two lorries, and one motor ambulance.

General Nixon's force was now very much split up. He had troops at Bushire, Bandiqir, Ahwaz, Abadan, Fao, Basra, Nasiniya, Qurna, Qala Salih, Amara, Ali Gharbi, as well as at and above Kut. At Kut and the vicinity he had 8 squadrons and a horse artillery battery, 6th Division headquarters, and three infantry brigades with a complement of

artillery, engineers, and signals. The 30th Infantry Brigade, less 2 battalions, were doing L. of C. duties. At Ali Gharbi were half a battalion and one gun. At Amara were the 12th Divisional headquarters and $1\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of the 30th Brigade. At Qala Salih there was a platoon. At Qurna there was half a battalion. At Nasiriya there was a squadron, the 12th Infantry Brigade, and a mountain battery. At Basra were the Headquarters of the L. of C. and two battalions of the 33rd Infantry Brigade. At Fao were 14 riflemen. At Abadan were one officer and 25 rifles. At Ahwaz were a squadron and half a battalion. At Bandigir was a regiment, less one squadron. At Bushire were a squadron and two battalions.

Now, considerations for an advance on Baghdad were put forward. The fall of Baghdad would have a great effect all over the Mohammedan East, and perhaps throughout the world. It would balance our evacuation at Gallipoli.

It was an important strategical point, and it was a road centre for traders in the Middle East. It was the military base of Turkish Arabia, and therefore, its occupation might effect, in spite of the great distance, Turkish projects against Egypt, or operations against the Russians in Asia Minor.

Could we, on the other hand, be strong enough, or hope to be strong enough, to undertake such an operation with any prospect of success? Our strength was less than 10,000 effectives. Casualties from heat and unhealthy surroundings were daily reducing our force. Baghdad was 213 miles from Kut by water and our force, though organized for the water route, had only 27 steamers, which were insufficient. We had also very little land transport. In Baghdad there were 150,000 possibly hostile inhabitants. The Turks in the field were superior in numbers to our field army in and near Kut. Also reinforcements were expected. Even if General Townshend did reach Baghdad, could he hold it with a long and precarious line of communications open to the raids of treacherous Arabs? Where was the policy to stop of depriving the enemy of possible advanced bases? The further we went into the enemy's country the longer and more difficult our own communications became.

Strategically also the situation was unsound, as the M.E.F. was dispersed and there was no general reserve. Our administrative demands could not be met from India. The expedition had passed beyond the scope of its original task without a proportionate augmentation in strength or in

ability to maintain itself. Yet General Nixon advocated the advance to Baghdad as he considered that the troops at his disposal were sufficient to inflict decisive defeat upon the Turks and to seize Baghdad. He considered that he would stabilize the political situation in Persia, and would deprive the Germans of a centre for hostile propaganda and, thus, would add to British prestige. The Military Secretary in India did, however, point out that an advance on Baghdad would be dangerous, and that close to the city there were no suitable tactical positions from which to defend his flanks and communications. At the War Office the military opinion was unanimous in recommending that General Nixon should hold his position and should not embark on an enterprise which would make heavy demands on our man-power and resources. Political opinion both in India and at home unanimously inclined towards an advance.

The administrative situation, however, was in the background. Also the difficulty of holding Baghdad was not sufficiently considered, nor was General Nixon's lack of land and river transport for the maintenance of his position and its consolidation appreciated.

The Secretary of State for War was opposed to any larger military enterprise than a raid on Baghdad, as it was learned that Turkish reinforcements were moving from the Caucasus, Mosul, and Syria towards Baghdad, and that the strength of these reinforcements was at least a division.

General Nixon, however, estimated that it would take at least eight weeks for troops to arrive from Constantinople, and five weeks from Bitlis; and also he considered that if these Turkish troops did arrive he could deal with them better at Baghdad than in his present position.

27th October. The 6th Division and the 6th Cavalry Brigade, after a night march, reached Kutuniya, and completely surprised the Turks there, and then, after burning at dawn the enemy's camp and blowing up their fortified house there, this force returned to Aziziya.

General Townshend now grouped his force into three columns, with the cavalry available to operate on the northern flank. The plan of attack in November was similar to that at Kut. The enemy south of the river was to be ignored except by the naval flotilla. The Turkish centre and left was to be attacked and turned by two columns, while General Hoghton's column attacked frontally north of the

river and the cavalry and 48th Pioneers under General Melliss harassed the enemy's line of retreat. Then the advance on Baghdad was to be continued.

11th November. 18th Brigade and 6th Cavalry Brigade arrived at Kutuniya.

17th November. It was reported that 30,000 Turks under Khalil Pasha were marching from Anatolia to Iraq; and that General von der Goltz was to command the Turkish troops in Mesopotamia. General Nixon informed the War Office that he did not accept this information. He estimated the Turks at 11,000; actually they had 16,000 at Ctesiphon.

General Townshend's force, including two and a half battalions of the 30th Brigade, amounted to less than 14,000, of which 8,500 were infantry. His transport arrangements were still unsatisfactory.

He had 1,000 mules, 620 camels, 660 carts, 240 donkeys, five river transport steamers, and two hospital ships capable of taking 1,500 casualties. Thus the situation from an administrative as well as from a strategic point of view was unfavourable.

No general reserve and no reinforcements were available.

18th November. Orders were given by General Townshend for an advance on Zor.

19th November. The advance to Zor was made by the two brigades of the 6th Division and the Cavalry Brigade.

The Turks evacuated Zor on the approach of our cavalry. General Townshend then sent for the remainder of his division. These troops arrived during the night. A bridge was constructed across the Tigris.

20th November. General Townshend's force concentrated at Lajj.

21st November. General Townshend issued his orders for the battle. He intended to attack the Turks on the left bank of the Tigris with three columns separated 4,000 yds. apart, keeping no reserve in hand.

The 17th Brigade was to contain the enemy just north of the river. The 16th and 30th Brigades (less a battalion) were to make the main attack against the enemy's centre, while the Divisional Cavalry and 18th Brigade made an enveloping attack round the enemy's left flank. General Melliss was to work round the northern flank of the enemy with the Cavalry Brigade, "S" Battery, R.H.A., and the 48th Pioneers. General Townshend realized the gravity of his

task, namely, that though he was attacking he had no definite superiority of force.

He writes in his *Campaign in Mesopotamia* that "he hoped to make up for want of numbers by exploiting the principle of economy of force.

"He hoped to paralyse a great part of the forces of the enemy, extended along a large extent of front by the use of an inferior fraction of my troops, acting as a minimum force, disguising its weakness by audacity, or in forcing it to undertake an enterprise which will cost heavily, while he hit the hammer blow on the enemy's flank and rear with his principal mass."

Secret instructions were also issued that in case of a repulse the force would fall back on Lajj under the protection of the 16th and 30th Brigades, which would become the rearguard. The columns were to move out of camp on the 21st November. The column to make the frontal attack marched at 14.00 hours, the remainder after dusk.

All columns reached their positions of deployment successfully.

22nd November. The Turks were found to be holding a front of 6 miles. The enemy were first struck by the troops making the northern attack.

Then the cavalry farther north pressed round to their second line of trenches, while the frontal attack was slowly continued by General Hoghton. By 11.00 hours the turning attack under General Hamilton, with the Norfolks and 110th Light Infantry leading, pressed through the first line and gained a footing in the second line. Here they were heavily counter-attacked by reinforcements sent forward by Khalil Pasha. Our casualties were considerable, especially among the British officers of Indian units.

The result was that the wounded were brought back by unwounded men contrary to orders. Staff officers rallied the troops, and although we were not able to maintain our position gained in the enemy's front-line trenches, we occupied the Turk's forward posts. The Cavalry were driven back to their original positions. Our losses were such that none of the brigades were equal in strength to a British battalion.

Nearly half the rifle strength of the original force was now out of action. The Turks, however, had had heavy losses, and it was probable that they would also withdraw. It was necessary to rally the troops, and to re-form them into units.

Orders were consequently sent out for a position to be occupied on a front of 10,000 yds. from the river, and 5,000 yds. east of the Ctesiphon Arch. Luckily the Turks did not counter-attack or follow up our withdrawal, but they withdrew behind the Diyala river.

23rd November. General Townshend's force occupied the position east of the Arch of Ctesiphon as ordered on the previous day. At 21.00 hours the Turks made a strong counter-attack against our right flank and centre. It was not until 02.00 hours that these attacks were finally repulsed.

24th November. General Townshend decided to withdraw back to Lajj. His division was to march back in one column, covered by the 16th and 18th Brigades under General Delamain.

The Turks, uncertain as to what General Townshend's action was to be, and thinking that he was again advancing, began to withdraw during the night. When they found that no British advance was being made they counter-marched.

26th November. By 01.00 hours General Townshend's force reached Lajj, and the enemy advanced from the second line of trenches at Ctesiphon.

Our position at Lajj was entrenched. General Townshend decided to withdraw to Azizuja. Air force reported the enemy, estimated at 12,000 rifles and 400 sabres, to be advancing on Lajj. This was the advanced guard of the Turkish Army. General Townshend decided to withdraw back to Aziziya with the 30th and 17th Brigades in two columns, covered by the 16th and 18th Brigades under General Delamain.

27th November. The withdrawal was continued throughout the night via Zor and Kutuniya. Information was now received that three brigades would arrive by the 15th December. The Turks were at Kutuniya on this date. Our gunboat *Shaitan* had to be abandoned. The 14th Hussars reinforced General Townshend's force. They were able to help the Cavalry Brigade in their offensive operations. On this day they made a charge against the Arabs who were harassing our withdrawal and accounted for about 140 of them.

28th November. The 6th Division reached Aziziya. General Townshend then decided to retire on Kut, which he considered was the most suitable place for the concentration of troops. Orders were then issued for the Division to continue its march to Umm-al-Tubal in one column. General

Melliss with the 30th Brigade was ordered to go on ahead to Kut.

30th November. General Townshend's force started for Kut; reaching Umm-al-Tubal at midday. Orders were now sent to General Melliss to march back to the assistance of the 6th Division, as General Townshend feared that the enemy in considerable strength were in close proximity to Umm-al-Tubal.

1st December. By dawn the Turks, estimated at 12,000 men, were about 2,500 yds. from the camp, with the obvious intention of making an enveloping attack round our right flank.

Orders were at once issued for the 18th Brigade to make a frontal attack, while the 16th and 17th Brigades made enveloping attacks. The cavalry brigade was ordered to operate on the exterior flank of the enveloping attack. The vigorous action by the cavalry and the 16th and 17th Brigades caused the enemy's enveloping movement to stop, and then a general retirement took place.

As soon as the enemy's withdrawal began, General Townshend at 07.30 hours ordered his three brigades to retire in alternate echelons of brigades. This was carried out successfully and steadily. Our losses had been about 500 men. General Melliss with his brigade joined the 6th Division on the march at 09.30 hours. The Turks disabled the gunboats—*Comet* and *Firefly*. The cavalry brigade now acted as rearguard, but the Turks did not press the retreat, which was continued through the night to Shadie. The 6th Division had then marched 36 miles.

2nd December. The march to Kut was resumed. The Arabs harassed our retreat. The Commander at Kut came out to meet General Townshend, and asked him not to stay there, but to take up a position at Es Sinn. In Kut, he said, the enemy would be able to hold us with a small force, and to surround us. General Townshend, however, thought that his men were too tired to retire any further. Also, Kut was an important strategic centre.

3rd December. The Turks reached Sadie. General Townshend's force was almost non-effective from losses and fatigue. His strength now was 1,305 sabres, 39 guns, and 7,411 bayonets. He had sustained a severe strategical defeat after his tactical success at Ctesiphon.

Generals Nixon and Townshend both looked on this withdrawal as a temporary check to their further offensive

operations in the following March. General Nixon stated that he was waiting for transport and for reinforcements and for the Russians, who were reported to be 11,000 strong, and to be moving on Hamadan.

It was for this reason that he sanctioned the halt at Kut, and refused to consider the selection of a defensive position nearer his base. The Viceroy still considered that the best way to counter German and Turkish intrigues and operations both on the Tigris and towards the north-west frontier was to advance to Baghdad. Accordingly he asked for another division to be sent out. He and General Nixon did not realize that with a force at Kut it was necessary to improve the communications, and to add to the facilities at the base, and at intermediate bases in order to maintain this extra division. At present there were two divisions on the sea, and their maintenance would be precarious.

The delivery by steamer for all arms and services at the front was calculated at 170 tons a day. This would not be sufficient for the force with the two extra divisions. Therefore, there was no strategical foresight shown in the demand for an additional division, thus bringing the total number in Mesopotamia up to five divisions. Kut was not easy to defend. It depended for its safety on a long and precarious line of communications. It was insanitary, and would thus cause casualties among the weak and tired troops. To reinforce it the new divisions would have to make a long and trying march over desert roads. General Nixon, however, was anxious to concentrate as far forward as possible in order to resume the offensive against Baghdad. Also prestige would suffer if he continued to retire from a position commanding the main Turkish line of advance from Baghdad against Basra. On the other hand, by withdrawing, General Townshend would be coming nearer to his own reinforcements, and would add to the length of the Turkish communications.

Actually, on the 2nd December, it would not have been possible to have marched any further. The column did not reach Shumran till dusk, and the rearguard did not arrive till much later.

4th December. General Townshend now divided Kut into sectors for defensive purposes, the 16th Brigade holding the Northern Sector, 17th Brigade the North-east sector, 18th Brigade the Southern sector, with the 30th Brigade in

general reserve. He was not able to use the right bank with a defensible bridge-head, so that he could conduct an active defence, as his troops were too much exhausted to do any entrenching after their long march. General Nixon approved of the proposal to make Kut into an entrenched camp. He also stated that he hoped to concentrate troops at Amara for its relief in two months.

6th December. The Cavalry Brigade was sent back from Kut. General Townshend's combatant strength, augmented by one and a half battalions found in Kut, was now 8,393. General Townshend reviewed the situation, and considered that if he was not relieved for two months the whole Turkish army of six divisions would be round him, and he would be forced to surrender.

Accordingly he proposed to withdraw to Ali Gharbi, and to make a stand there, and to act as a covering force to the main concentration. He felt that his position was insecure, as he was confined in a narrow peninsular, and now that his troops were rested he still had time to withdraw, and to save his ammunition and guns.

General Nixon, however, replied that as long as he remained at Kut the enemy was in ignorance of his plan, and that he was fulfilling the duties of a detachment by holding up superior numbers. General Nixon went on to say that he did not approve of the proposal to fall back. He counted on receiving reinforcements of two divisions by the end of the month, and on receiving help from Russia.

7th December. General Townshend agreed to remain in Kut. He reported that the Turks had moved downstream past Kut on both banks.

The enemy now closed in on our northern front round Kut, and the siege began.

General Nixon's decision to stand at Kut was not based on a thorough consideration of administrative considerations. The offensive policy was uppermost in General Nixon's mind, and prestige was again allowed to weigh in the balance against the question of time and space. Kut was 285 miles from the base, and there were no reinforcements in the country.

9th December. The Turks heavily shelled Kut. The detachment of 67th Punjabis covering the bridge on the right bank of the River Tigris was forced to retreat, and the bridge was blown up.

10th December. General Aylmer assumed command of the Tigris line. The Turks delivered a heavy attack along the northern defences of Kut. They entrenched and sapped close up to our trenches. The enemy was estimated to be 12,000 with 33 guns.

19th December. It was reported that Von der Goltz, with 40,000 men, was about to invade Persia. The Russians intended to occupy Kermanshah and Khanikin.

The engineers in Kut found it impossible to bridge the Tigris. Townshend, therefore, urged General Aylmer to endeavour to relieve Kut by the left bank, so that then both forces could join hands.

A calculation was made that to cross the River Tigris with the available river transport, namely, the *Sumara* and one launch, two barges, and 50 mahelas, nine days would be required.

24th December. The Turks opened fire from 05.15 hours to 08.30 hours on the Liquorice Factory and village, while they pressed their attack against the fort at the eastern extremity of the northern line of wire and trenches covering the loop of the peninsula in which Kut was situated. By 12.30 hours our front line covering the fort had to be evacuated, and the enemy effected a lodgment in this line.

A counter-attack drove the Turks out of a bastion in the fort. In these frontal assaults the Turks were finally repulsed with grenades from a distance of 10 yds. at 02.00 hours on Christmas morning. It was estimated that the Turks had lost 2,000 men in their determined attempts to carry the fort.

Our casualties for the siege up to this date were 1,625. The Turks in making their purely frontal assaults by day made no feints, and their heavy preliminary bombardment precluded any possibility of a surprise.

26th December. It was estimated that two divisions were crossing the River Tigris at the Shumran bend, across a pontoon bridge which had been erected.

The Turks pitched a camp 7 or 8 miles west of Kut. They were thus dividing their forces to block approaches to Kut on both banks of the river.

General Aylmer now estimated that by the 3rd January he would have ready at Ali Gharbi the 7th Division and one Infantry Brigade, and the Cavalry Brigade for the relief of Kut. General Townshend was urgently asking for relief by at least the middle of January. General Aylmer would not

by this time have his whole Corps ready to advance, and he knew that the enemy was in superior strength, and was in a strongly entrenched position.

General Nixon, however, decided that though he did not want the Tigris Corps to advance in detail, yet so urgent was the situation that an attempt must be made to relieve Kut. He ordered General Aylmer to start his advance on the 3rd January against the enemy at Shaikh Saad. General Townshend now considered that he had no more than 5,000 rifles 12 field guns, 4 howitzers, and 2 naval 4·7 in. guns fit to co-operate. Casualties were daily about 30. The total up to 31st December was 1,774.

GENERAL SUMMARY

1916

The Turks were driven out of their advanced position at Ali Gharbi, and later were defeated at Shaikh Saad, when they withdrew to Umm al Hanna. On the 21st January General Aylmer attacked the Hanna position; our losses, however, were so heavy that it was necessary to wait for reinforcements before continuing offensive operations.

General Sir P. Lake now succeeded General Nixon in command of the Mesopotamia Force.

The 13th Division from Egypt was now under orders to join General Lake's Force.

General Lake started to improve the administrative arrangements, and to develop the port of Basra and the wharves at Qurna.

General Aylmer's next attempt to relieve Kut was made on the night of 7/8th March without waiting for the arrival of the 13th Division. He decided to attempt to surprise the Turks in their Es Sinn position on the right bank of the Tigris 8 miles from Kut. This operation would enable us to make fuller use of our mobility than was possible in the Hanna defile. However, we did not surprise the Turks; our naval flotilla was unable to co-operate, as the ships could not pass above Hanna and the enemy's strong position had been recently reinforced. Our attacks were unsuccessful, and we had to retire to Shaikh Saad.

General Gorringe now succeeded General Aylmer. He was unable to make another attempt to relieve Kut until the 5th April, owing to the necessity for reorganizing his

administrative arrangements. On this date the 13th Division assaulted the Hanna lines successfully, but when the 7th and 13th Divisions then attacked the Sannaiyat lines they were repulsed. Another effort was made by the 7th Division against Sannaiyat on the 22nd April.

This also failed. On the night of 24/25th April the paddle steamer *Julnar*, loaded with 270 tons of provisions, sufficient for the troops in Kut for 3 weeks, tried to get into Kut. She was held up by wire $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town and was captured. On the 29th April approximately 9,000 British and Indian troops surrendered at Kut. The casualties of the relief force had been approximately 24,000.

General Maude now replaced General Gorringe in command of the forces at the front. On the 28th July he became Commander of the Mesopotamia Force in succession to General Sir P. Lake.

The Royal Commission set up to inquire into the Mesopotamia operations had reported that "the undertaking of a campaign on so ambitious a scale without adequate forethought and efficient preparations was worthy of blame." General Maude throughout the summer accordingly improved the landing facilities at the ports, marching roads were built, heavy artillery was accumulated, and another division was brought from India. The river traffic was organized on a definite basis, and the whole system was placed under the Inland Water Transport. By the beginning of December General Maude was in a position to assume the offensive and to maintain it, as he had sufficient war material, and also the vessels available would enable him to supply his troops adequately.

On the 13th December his operations began. His force had now a four to one superiority over the Turks.

His army was astride the Tigris. Its left was the II Army Corps under General Marshall about Es Sinn, and its right was the I Army Corps under General Cobbe, facing Sannaiyat.

General Maude's plan was to push his left flank farther forward, and to clear the right bank of the River Tigris above Kut, and, when this had been effectively carried out, to force the Sannaiyat lines with his right. The offensive was started by the II Corps forcing the Shatt-al-Hai after a night march and capturing some of the Turkish defences forming a bridge-head south of Kut. Maude's operations were carried out slowly and by successive stages.

1916

4th January. The enemy now had the 45th and 36th Divisions, i.e. 11,500 bayonets and 41 guns, at the Shumran Bend (9 miles west of Kut). On the left bank near Kut were the 5th, 31st, and 38th Divisions, with a total of 12,900 bayonets and 24 guns. At Es Sinn was the 35th Division with 2,500 bayonets and 18 guns.

At Shaikh Saad on both banks of the river were four battalions and 2,000 mounted men.

5th January. A column of Turks, estimated at about 8,000 men, was reported to be marching towards Es Sinn.

7th January. General Gorringe made a demonstration from Nasiriya up the Hai towards Kut.

The Tigris Corps fought the first battle for the relief of Kut.

The 7th Division, under General Younghusband, attacked the enemy $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles below Shaikh Saad.

His orders were to contain the enemy until General Aylmer brought up the remainder of the Tigris Corps. However, he became seriously engaged before General Aylmer took command. The Turks' gun and rifle fire was effective, mirage prevented accurate support and observation, and the result was that our frontal attacks made little progress. Heavy rain fell during the night.

8th January. North of the river General Younghusband's turning movement against the Turks' left flank was checked by counter-enveloping operations, and his force was unable to carry the Turkish trenches in his front in spite of continuous attacks. South of the river General Kembell's brigade and attached troops captured enemy's trenches, with 600 prisoners and 2 guns. Our casualties, however, were heavy, namely, 4,262.

The Turks gave way and abandoned their trenches, falling back to a second entrenched position about 10 miles back. The heavy rain had turned the sandy ground into glutinous mud, making effective and continuous pursuit impossible.

The Turks fell back to a point where a small tributary runs into the Tigris from the north, 35 miles from Kut by river, and 25 miles in a straight line. Their position taken up was at Ora and Es Sinn.

9th January. General Aylmer was able to advance. General Townshend received a message from the Army

Commander directing him not to make a sortie or to cut his way out of Kut except in desperate extremity.

General Nixon's health broke down and he handed over his command. He was succeeded by General Sir Percy Lake.

The enemy were strongly entrenched with their flanks resting on impassable obstacles, namely, the Suwaikiya marsh and the River Tigris.

10th January. The Turks advanced to the line of the Wadi, about 9 miles up stream of Shaikh Saad on the left bank of the river.

13th January. General Aylmer, hoping to be able to outmanoeuvre the enemy, decided to attack the Turks in their Wadi position, relying for success on the accurate movement and timing of three widely separated columns. Unfortunately the plans were not accurately carried out, owing to the difficulties of intercommunication, lack of accurate maps, and the difficulty of recognizing and locating the exact position of troops in the open desert. The result was that our frontal attacks pinned the enemy to his ground where they were heavily shelled by artillery and by gunboats on the river, while a portion of our force worked round their northern flanks. The advance across the open ground, in which there was no cover, was costly. Before sunset we had gained a footing in some of the enemy's trenches. But the turning movement of the 7th Division had been held up by the Turkish forces facing north on an east-and-west line.

Our casualties were over 1,600 on this day. The Turks were able to withdraw to a fresh position 4 miles farther up the river.

14th January. The whole of the Turkish Wadi position was in our hands.

General Townshend now estimated that he could hold out till the 10th February.

15th January. General Aylmer now had the 3rd and 7th Divisions, but his losses had been over 6,000, so that his fighting strength did not exceed 9,000.

The Turks were now in a very strong position, blocking the entrance of the Wadi-Nakhailat defile. Behind that was a line of entrenchments, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, through Sannaiyat, between the marsh and Tigris.

Behind that was the Es Sinn position. General Aylmer's plan was to attack frontally on the left bank, and to cross

the 3rd Division and Cavalry Brigade to the south bank in order to enfilade the enemy's position, and to deal with the 2,000 Turks now reported to be in this position.

General Aylmer asked how Townshend could co-operate, and if he could cross the river in his 50 mahelas and any other river transport available, and march with all able-bodied men round Es Sinn.

16th January. The Army Commander did not agree to the proposal for General Townshend's action. General Townshend also reported that it was impossible for him to reach the right bank secretly or rapidly, and in one night he could only get 4,000 men across. Guns, munitions, and animals would have to be destroyed, and the force left behind in Kut with the wounded and followers would then be liable to defeat by superior forces.

17th January. General Aylmer, in spite of his shortage of land transport, of supply personnel, of ammunition, of bridging and medical equipment, decided to advance again to try to relieve General Townshend as early as possible. The weather now became very bad. The bridge thrown across the Wadi was washed away several times, and the work of bridging the River Tigris, 400 yds. wide in this area, was extremely difficult. General Aylmer had not sufficiently heavy guns to destroy the Turks' trenches. Nor would frontal fire be adequate; it was essential to get the guns across the Tigris to obtain the advantage of enfilade fire. These, in the absence of a bridge, had to be ferried across.

20th January. Detachments were ferried across to the right bank, and a systematic bombardment of the Turkish position began. During the night the infantry advanced lines were pushed forward towards the Turks' main position north of the river.

21st January. Battle of Hannah.

The 7th Division advanced frontally against the enemy's trenches north of the river, supported only by three 18-pounder batteries, ten 4-in. batteries, one 4.5-in. battery, four mountain guns, and one 15-pounder battery.

By 06.00 hours one column, consisting of the Black Watch, 6th Jats, and 41st Dogras, gained a footing in the enemy's trenches north of the River Tigris.

The rest of the attacking force got within 100 yds. of the Turks' trenches, but they could not advance.

Supports sent forward to those who had reached the

trenches lost direction, and came under heavy fire, and failed to reach them. Then the Turks counter-attacked, and we were overwhelmed by numbers, and pushed back from the captured trenches. After further bombardment a second attack was made at 13.00 hours. The mud was now very deep. Progress was very slow, and our casualties were heavy from the accurate fire from the Turks in their trenches. The G.O.C. 3rd Division on the right bank reported that the Tigris was flooding over its banks making movement very difficult, as the ground was marshy and boggy.

Troops on the north bank withdrew 1,300 yds. from the enemy's trenches, back to the positions occupied two days ago. They were so much disorganized owing to the unsuccessful attempts to assault the Turks' trenches, that it was not possible for the present to renew the assaults.

General Aylmer now asked General Townshend if it would be possible to make a sortie from Kut. General Townshend replied that to do this he would have to assault the enemy's investing works and redoubts, wading up to the waist in water in places, and under an enfilade artillery fire. His north-west section of defences would be immediately attacked and assaulted by the bulk of the investing troops. In making a sortie in force, in which it was intended to return, General Townshend considered that he might lose Kut, and in the open he might be attacked by superior and converging forces.

General Aylmer's casualties were 2,740. Owing to the cold rain and exposure the sufferings of the wounded were terrible. Also the medical personnel was inadequate for dealing with the casualties. This affected the morale of the troops.

On this day, when our troops were unsuccessfully assaulting the Turks' trenches, there were at Basra 10,000 men and 12 guns who could not be transported to the front owing to lack of transport and unloading facilities.

General Lake determined to deal with the confusion and congestion at the base, and to improve all the administrative conditions of the lines of communication.

22nd January. General Townshend reported that by putting his troops on half-rations he could hold out for 27 days.

General Lake, therefore, decided that it would be desirable to postpone any farther advance, and to reorganize the

relieving force before trying to break through the enemy's strongly entrenched positions.

It was, therefore, decided that General Aylmer should hold the present position, 1,300 yds. in front of the enemy's position, with a reserve line behind.

25th January. General Townshend discovered a store of food in Kut, and he was able to report that by making use of this and killing his horses and mules he would be able to hold out for 84 days. Consequently for the next month reinforcements were pushed up, and minor operations for the next month were undertaken in order to gain information and to harass the enemy. The Turks also received reinforcements and constructed fresh lines west of Hannah, and between the Tigris and the northern marshes.

The War Committee in England now ordered that the 13th Division should be sent from Egypt to Basra.

31st January. The Turks were now estimated at five divisions; approximately 24,500 rifles and 78 guns. They had two divisions at Hannah, two divisions in the vicinity of Kut, and one division on the right bank opposite Sinn.

16th February. The campaign in Mesopotamia became the responsibility of the Imperial General Staff, who were to co-ordinate the whole military efforts as a part of the Imperial war plans. India was to remain the base for the force, and questions of policy likely to affect her internal and foreign relations were to be referred to the Indian Government.

21st February. The 3rd Division occupied the Abu Rumman Mounds.

25th February. The Russian Army after their capture of Erzeroum, reached Kermanshah. General Aylmer, therefore, considered that in view of the strength of the successive positions on his front a direct assault over the open would be too costly. It would not be possible owing to the extent of floods and marshes on the Turks' left flank to make an outflanking movement.

Therefore, he decided to move out to the southward with all the available transport, and to carry two days' supplies, and to try to encircle the three Turkish lines on the south bank of the River Tigris, and to attack the main Es Sinn position in the vicinity of the Dujaila redoubt, as well as the enemy's positions in the ground between this redoubt and the Shatt-al-Hai. The strength of the Tigris Corps was

not suitable for offensive operations on an extended scale, as it was not so strong in rifles as the enemy's force, being 23,000 rifles and 74 guns.

4th March. General Townshend reported that he could not hold out longer than the end of the month. General Aylmer then decided to attack on the right bank as early as possible.

7th March. General Aylmer's force consisting of 4 regiments, 28 battalions, and 68 guns, concentrated on the right bank of the River Tigris. The enemy was to be contained in their Hannah position on the north bank by the 7th Division. The southern force was to make a night march of 14 miles, and attack the main Es Sinn position in the vicinity of the Dujaila redoubt and the ground between it and the Shatt-al-Hai. It was to move to its position from which the assault was to be made by night. This night march was necessary in order to gain the value of surprise by an attack at dawn. General Kemball's column was to attack the Dujaila Redoubt; General Keary's column was to attack the enemy's position north of this redoubt from the east.

Unfortunately the concentration of these two columns took longer than had been estimated, because one column was a very long one, as it contained all the field artillery and transport. The march started $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours' late, and consequently all the columns did not reach their positions from which to assault till after dawn.

8th March. General Kemball's column arrived at its allotted position up to time at daybreak. The Turks were completely surprised and our objective, the Dujaila redoubt was practically unoccupied. However, so detailed had the orders been that he did not feel justified in acting on his own initiative. He waited in a depression near the Redoubt for the arrival of the other column in their position, as laid down for them in Orders.

His attack was not delivered for nearly three hours after his arrival, and by that time the enemy had manned their trenches and brought down their reinforcements. At 09.35 hours the leading brigade advanced to make a frontal attack against the enemy's position. All surprise effect had been forfeited. There was no cover. The troops were tired after their long night march. In spite of a very gallant advance we failed to capture our objectives. Our casualties

were 3,500. Luckily the Turks made no counter-attacks. It was not possible to maintain troops so far away as Dujaila from the river-head with the available transport. The troops were widely dispersed, and were a long way from drinking water.

Also the troops were too much exhausted, and had suffered too heavily to be able to renew their attacks.

9th March. General Aylmer withdrew his force back to the original position north of the river. He could not leave open his line of retreat to an attack by the Turks; nor could he rely upon the safety of his land route from Dujaila to his ships on the Tigris. The Turks also by inundations could cut off his retreat altogether.

12th March. General Aylmer was succeeded in his command by General Gorringe.

The Turks were now busily engaged in digging trenches at their Hannah position on a front of 1,300 yds. between the Tigris and Suwaiqiya marsh to a depth of 2,600 yds.

General Gorringe's plan was to capture the Hannah position, and then to transfer his troops to the right bank and drive the enemy out of his Abu Rumman position, and then to advance on both banks of the river against the enemy in their Sannaiyat position.

25th March. The 13th Division arrived at Shaikh Saad. The Turks also had received reinforcements. Their numbers were 30,000 and 96 guns near Kut.

1st April. The 13th Division relieved the 7th Division in the forward trenches preparatory to making an attack against the Hannah position.

5th April. The 13th Division made an assault at daybreak and found that the Turks had withdrawn to the line Fallahiyeh—Abu Rumman. The 3rd Division on the south bank of the River Tigris pushed forward without any difficulty. Between 19.15 and 19.30 hours the Fallahiyeh position was bombarded, and then assaulted by the 13th Division. Three battalions of Turks were holding this position, but by 21.30 hours we had captured it and then consolidated it.

The 13th Division lost 1,885 men on this day. The 7th Division from reserve passed through the 13th during the night with orders to attack at dawn the enemy in the Sannaiyat position. The 7th Division had to keep direction by moving with its left flank along a communication trench leading from the captured trench up to the enemy's present

position. It had not been possible to reconnoitre the ground during daylight, and the existence of numerous unknown cross trenches made progress very slow during the hours of darkness. The result was that at dawn the 7th Division was still 2,300 yds. from the enemy's trenches. No surprise attack was therefore possible. The advance, however, was carried on to within 700 yds. of the Turkish trenches.

Here the attackers were definitely checked, and had eventually to fall back to a line 1,000 yds. from the enemy. Here the position was consolidated.

On the right bank the Turks had opened the bunds at Bait Isa and at Abu Rumman, and had made inundations and marshes of considerable extent. In spite of that, however, it was decided to operate on the right bank, and to force the enemy's Sinn position south of Sinn banks on the 13th April with the 3rd Division and the 37th Brigade, supported by the 13th Division and the 36th Brigade and cavalry on the left flank. The Turks at this time had 13,000 rifles and 34 guns in Sannaayat. Round Kut were 5,200 rifles and 21 guns; round the Dujaila position were 11,000 rifles, 35 guns, and a cavalry brigade.

Our numbers were 24,000 rifles and 135 guns, with a cavalry brigade. Our troops were very tired; they had many skirmishes with Arabs, and had to be constantly on the alert. Rations were not plentiful.

12th April. An advance was made on the south bank of about 1,000 yds.

Heavy gales caused the general offensive operation to be postponed. The weather conditions and the boggy ground made all movement very difficult, and consequently delayed our offensive operations.

15th April. The 8th Brigade advanced their positions half a mile and captured 40 prisoners.

The plan now was to assault Bait Isa with the 3rd Division. Then when the 13th Division had relieved the 3rd Division the advance was to be continued by the 3rd Division, who were to march round the Dujaila trenches. This involved much night marching by units, and added to the fatigue and discomfort of the troops.

17th April. At dawn the assault against the enemy's trenches began with the 7th and 9th Brigades each on a 300-yds. front. These brigades had to advance a 1,000 yds., but they were covered by the light, early morning mist, and

were able to reach the Turkish trenches at the same time as the barrage, although they had to cross 1,000 yds. of ground devoid of any cover.

Khalil Pasha then collected all available reserves in the Sinn banks—Maqasis area, and organized a counter-attack. At 17.30 hours the Turkish artillery opened fire just as the 3rd Division were preparing to hand over the forward trenches to the advanced parties of the 13th Division. At 19.00 hours the Turkish infantry attacked and drove back the 9th Brigade till they were checked by the 8th Brigade. The 9th Brigade then rallied and formed up on the right of the 8th Brigade. The enemy penetrated into the position held by the 7th Brigade. The 13th Division reinforced the forward brigades and took over the northern part of the line which had been held by the 7th Division. During the night the Turks launched eight serious attacks against our new front-line trenches. We had 4 mountain guns in the firing-line and with the effective rifle fire of the men holding the trenches the enemy's attacks were repulsed with an estimated loss of 4,000 men. Our casualties were 1,650.

The 13th Division was unable to advance on the following days in face of the enemy's superiority in numbers.

In commenting on this action it should be noted (1) that the Turks made an excellent counter-attack. It was skilfully organized, although troops had to be brought across the river by ferry only, it was led with great determination, was well timed, given good direction, and struck our troops at a time when there was inevitable disorganization owing to relief. It effectually stopped any further efforts to relieve Kut on the right bank. (2) Artillery had a valuable moral and material effect when boldly handled in the firing line in the defence. (3) The effect of rifle fire by the 8th Brigade was considerable and caused very heavy losses to the Turks. (4) The movements in these operations were unnecessarily complicated, involving much counter-marching, and, owing to fatigue, the work of consolidation was not adequately carried out on the 17th April. (5) It was necessary to gain Bait Isa before an advance to Sinn could be made to ensure immunity from inundation farther west. (6) The capture of Bait Isa would require a separate and fresh body of troops. The use of the same troops for the capture of both Bait Isa and the objective was unnecessarily trying, and General Gorringe had available the 3rd and 13th Divisions, and the

35th, 36th, and 37th Brigades. (7) Owing to the strength of the defences at Bait Isa it was considered that the enemy was in reduced strength at Sannaiyat, and that there was a chance of gaining an immediate success, and of relieving Kut in spite of the waterlogged trenches and the flooded country. (8) As Kut was now on minimum rations, it was considered necessary to take the risks justified by the vital importance of time.

The plan now was that the 7th Division, supported by the 35th and 36th Brigades, should attack Sannaiyat on the 20th April. The weather conditions, however, were so unfavourable that the attack had to be postponed.

22nd April. At 07.00 hours the 7th Division started to attack the enemy's position behind a barrage. The men had great difficulty in advancing owing to the mud and water, and great difficulty in firing as their rifles became clogged. The 19th Brigade reached the enemy's first-line trenches and found that they were full of water, and had been evacuated. They then reached the second line. The 21st Brigade were unable to advance at all owing to the mud, and so the 19th Brigade were unsupported, and had both their flanks in the air when the enemy counter-attacked.

The first hostile counter-attack was stopped by the fire of our artillery and machine guns from the south of the river.

Just as it was repulsed a second counter-attack was made on the right of the 19th Brigade, who were then driven back to our original lines by 08.40 hours. Their casualties were 1,300. It must be noted that (1) the left of the attack was kept at a considerable distance from the river, and thus the Turkish machine guns were able to enfilade our troops from the south as they advanced; (2) the action of the 21st Brigade in not supporting the 19th Brigade is difficult to explain, owing to the fact that the ground on their front was no worse than that in front of the 19th Brigade.

Owing to the bad weather, the heavy casualties, and fatigue of the troops, no further attempt could be made to relieve Kut. Since 5th April we had lost 10,000 men, and since January our battle casualties had been 60 per cent of the forces engaged; on neither bank of the River Tigris had Turkish resistance been overcome or materially shaken.

24th April. The *Julner*, a river steamer, attempted to run into Kut loaded with supplies for three weeks. It was

stopped by hawsers stretched across the river and was captured.

29th April. General Townshend, with a force of 9,250 British and Indians, surrendered.

The main points to be noted in the four months' fighting for the relief of Kut are—

1. The skill and rapidity with which the Turks delivered their immediate counter-attacks, and the determination with which they were led.

2. The passivity of the Kut garrison. It was in an unfavourable tactical situation, rations were short, and the troops were physically exhausted.

3. The inactivity of our cavalry may be accounted for by the state of the weather and the condition of the ground, and by the overestimated apprehensions as to the Turkish cavalry and Arab horsemen who harassed our flanks by day and our camps at night. Early in March, however, the enemy's southern flank was vulnerable, and might have given the cavalry an excellent area for operations.

The northern flank on the Suwaikiya Marsh was not so suitable for operations as the water was knee deep.

4. It was found that the best naval co-operation was to be obtained by bombarding back areas with the 6-in. guns. Naval guns with direct fire and low trajectory, fired from a floating platform, could not be used to support infantry accurately or to lead them with barrage fire.

5. It was found that enfilade fire, even at direct and short ranges, was comparatively inefficient. This was due to the difficulties of observation, and to the design of the Turkish entrenchments which could not be subjected to destructive bombardment, as we were very short of high explosive shells, and we had no mortars or heavy guns. Altogether it was very difficult to support infantry attacks by fire owing to the impossibility of accurate observation for artillery and of the location of the enemy or our own troops. Even when attempts were made by means of flags to indicate the position of attacking troops, it was not found to be any help.

6. Air co-operation was limited owing to the small number of pilots and machines available. The machines were old, slow, and of poor performance. Aerial photography had not yet been introduced. The positions for aerodromes were restricted owing to the mud and floods, and the necessity for guarding them against the Arabs.

7. No tanks, Ford vans, or gas were available.

The next phase in this campaign was one of careful and complete preparation. General Maude made an almost unchecked advance with an army strong enough and well enough administered to deal with situations in their front.

Time was now spent in reorganization, and in improving the administrative situation.

1. Training and rest were given to the troops at the front.

2. Reserves of ammunition, especially H.E., were built up at the forward positions.

3. The divisions at the front were formed into two Corps the 1st and the 3rd.

4. Fresh methods of advancing to the attack were practised.

5. Additional artillery was provided, and guns were provided with tractor draught.

6. Pontoons and bridging trains, mobile over land, were formed.

7. Machine gun companies were brought out from England.

8. Stokes' mortars, grenades, and Vêry lights were also brought to this country.

9. Twenty-four up-to-date aeroplanes were available, with bombing and photographic devices.

10. Amara was converted into a first-class intermediate depôt.

11. A marching road with camps was constructed between Basra and Shaikh Saad.

12. Qurna and Amara were joined with a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. railway line, and we built a metre-gauge line to Nasariya.

13. Navigation through the Hammar lake was facilitated by cutting a channel through it. This was called the Akaika Channel.

14. Inland water transport was increased from 6 steamers and 8 tugs in 1915 to 446 steamer tugs and steam launches, 774 barges and 414 motor boats.

15. Development in the dockyard and basin slipways at Basra was made, repair shops were erected at Shaikh Saad and Amara.

16. Six thousand Chinese mechanics were employed at Basra.

17. River pilotage was arranged with pilots in their own sections.

18. Telephonic communication between Amara and the base was established.

19. There was electric lighting up the Narrows between Ezra's Tomb and Qala Salih.

20. Fuel reserves of oil and coal were arranged up-country.

21. The Political Department was increased, and personnel for all administrative offices was multiplied.

While these administrative improvements were being made the opposing armies were in close contact on the Tigris. On the left bank, the Sannaiyat position, consisting of five lines of trenches in depth, each of them covered by wire, blocked the defile between the Suwaiqiya Marsh and the River Tigris. Behind this position was a series of entrenchments as far back as Kut. On the southern bank of the River Tigris the Turks held the line of the Sinn banks—the Dujaila Redoubt and Atab. The Turks were in a strong position on the Tigris. It was difficult for our troops to be maintained in their forward positions as well as in the detached positions.

Heat was intense; the plague of flies added to the sickness of troops whose vitality was lowered. Therefore, as long as the Turkish position at Sannaiyat prevented the passage of British supply ships up the river and the Tigris Corps had insufficient transport to enable it to leave these ships, it was not possible for our force to advance. Consequently the Turkish Commander was able to hold our Tigris forces and also to concentrate 20,000 rifles, 1,700 sabres, and 50 guns against the Russians in Persia. This force Khalil Pasha formed into the 13th Corps, leaving the 45th, 51st, and 52nd Divisions formed into the 18th Corps to hold the Sannaiyat position, and the line of the Hai river. However, in addition to these two fronts the Turks were operating on the Egyptian and Armenian fronts.

1st May. The 7th Division was on the north bank of the river opposite Sannaiyat. The 13th and 3rd Divisions were on the south bank of the river opposite Bait Isa.

12th May. The 35th, 36th, and 37th Brigades were formed into the 14th Division.

19th May. The Turks evacuated their forward positions at Bait Isa.

20th May. The 3rd Division advanced 10 miles to a line from Maqasis to Dujaila.

11th July. General Maude assumed command of the Tigris Corps.

28th August. General Maude became Commander-in-Chief.

General Cobbe commanded the Tigris Corps.

General Maude now reported that "strategically we were better situated than the enemy." On both flanks to the north and south of the Tigris we were secured by swamps from any attempt to work round our flanks and to strike in force at our communications. His plan for further operations was to contain the enemy at Sannaiyat, and to seize and secure a point on the Hai, while we cleared the enemy from their trench system on the south bank of the Tigris, and finally, by working round Kut by the south, to cross the River Tigris at a point as far west as possible to sever the Turkish communications, and to cut off any troops remaining in the Sannaiyat positions.

The Russians had been driven back to Bisitun. The Turks had thus opened the road to Teheran, had increased the fears of the Indian Government as to an invasion of the north-west frontier, had prevented effective co-operation between the Russians and the British, and had removed the menace to Baghdad and its communications with the 18th Corps at Kut. However, it was impossible for the Tigris Corps to do more than carry out minor operations until the administrative situation had improved.

The strategical initiative, therefore, rested with the enemy for the present.

The Chief of the Staff at the War Office considered that the occupation of Baghdad would have no decisive effect upon the war as a whole.

If our policy was strictly defensive, then withdrawal would be the soundest course. If our policy was offensive, then additional expenditure of military resources would be required to enable General Maude to enforce it. This would be out of proportion to the result to be obtained at the decisive time and place. He strongly urged that we should adopt a defensive policy, as we could not afford to keep more than double the number of Turks in this area.

28th September. The War Committee reported that it was their intention, if and when possible, to establish British influence at Baghdad.

The Chief of the Staff saw that the military risk incurred by a further diversion of resources from the decisive theatre of war was considerable. However, it was pointed out that no advance could be undertaken until the reorganization of the army was completed.

General Maude favoured the occupation of a forward position, in order to carry out the policy now laid down and to uphold British prestige. His communications were secure, because on the left bank they could only be reached by a long detour north of the Suwaikiya Marsh, and on the right bank the long stretch of desert in which there was no drinking water made any outflanking movement on a large scale impossible. The occupation of the River Hai was of importance to both sides. If the Turks diverted the Tigris into it and made it into a line of communication it would enable them to transfer troops from the River Tigris to the River Euphrates against General Brooking's force at Nasiriya. If General Maude was able to gain the Hai, he would also obtain valuable supplies from its fertile banks, and would also be able to dominate the hostile Arabs of the Shattria tribe, numbering about 30,000, who operated from this area against our communications.

October. The Commander-in-Chief in India visited Mesopotamia on his way to India. He reported that in view of the improved situation administratively, of the increased morale and fighting efficiency of the troops, it would be possible to move our left flank forward to the River Hai, and to advance our position from Nasiriya to Samawa, where greater control would be exercised by us over the tribesmen, and our prestige would be greatly increased. This, he said, could be undertaken with few casualties. Maude was also instructed that severe losses must not be incurred.

November. The 7th Cavalry Brigade arrived.

General Maude reorganized the Tigris Corps, in order to add to its mobility and efficiency and flexibility in operations. It was as follows: General Crocker commanding the Cavalry Division (6th and 7th Brigades); 1st Corps under General Cobbe; the 7th, 8th, and 9th Brigades forming the 3rd Division (General Keary); the 19th, 21st, 28th Brigades forming the 7th Division (General Fane); 3rd Corps under General Marshall with the 13th Division (General Cayley); 38th, 39th, 40th Brigades: 14th Division (General Egerton) 35th, 36th, 37th Brigades.

The Turkish 18th Corps (45th, 51st, 52nd Divisions) occupied the Sannaiyat defences and the reserve trenches behind them with 7,500 rifles and 55 guns. On the south bank the enemy, with 2,500 rifles and 15 guns, had strong defences at the Khadairi bend and at the Hai salient; the

line of the Hai was watched by infantry posts and Arab irregulars. The total, including reserves in the 18th Corps, was 20,000 rifles and 70 guns and 700 sabres. Their 13th Corps in Persia opposing the Russians was 17,000 rifles and 50 guns. In reserve at Baghdad they had 4,000 rifles, and on the Euphrates about 2,000 rifles and 8 guns. General Maude's position on the north bank ran parallel to Turkish trenches and 120 yds. from it, then along the south bank for 11 miles up to Maqasis, then round in a half-circle to Dujaila Redoubt, 2 miles from the Turks at Khadairi Bend, and 5 miles from the Hai. His ration strength was 64,000 British 156,350 Indians, with a fighting strength of 3,500 sabres, 45,000 rifles, and 174 guns. General Maude had a great advantage over the enemy in fighting strength, in armament, and in mobility.

Therefore he would be able to take the initiative, and he could make his plans within the limitations imposed upon him by water supply, transport, and casualties.

While the enemy held Sannaiyat his supply ships could not go beyond Shaikh Saad; from here he was dependent on land transport.

His land transport would not permit him to move either very rapidly or very far from the river. On the other hand, a frontal attack against his nearest enemy at Sannaiyat would be costly, and he had not sufficient heavy artillery with which to bombard the Turks' entrenchments effectively. He might however, contain the enemy at Sannaiyat, and manœuvre on the right bank in order to strike at his flank and communications, and thereby gain decisive results. He might also attack simultaneously on both banks. This again would be costly on the north bank, and it would be hazardous to endeavour during a battle to transfer troops across a swift river, 1,000 ft. wide. If only manœuvres were carried out on the right bank, the enemy might withdraw from his defences in good order to others in the rear from which later it would be necessary to eject him and for this, sooner or later, a decisive battle would be necessary.

If a passive attitude was adopted, the morale of the troops would suffer, and Khahil Pasha would be able to carry out his scheme of advancing through Persia with the 13th Corps, and attacking General Maude's communications on the River Tigris.

12th December. General Maude brought his headquarters

to Arab Village. His concentration on the Tigris front was complete.

He decided to assume the offensive for the following reasons: (1) to protect India, (2) to regain our prestige, (3) to utilize our large forces now assembled in the Eastern theatre, (4) to protect the north-west frontier of India, (5) to eradicate from the mind of the Turks and Arabs the slur of the Kut disaster.

The criticisms open to these operations are that this was a secondary theatre of operations, and a large force was committed to these operations, whereas every available man was required at the point where the main and only victory could be obtained. Though General Maude did concentrate 72,000 fighting men at his front, yet he left the whole of the 15th Division on the River Euphrates.

However, his superiority over the Turks 18th Corps on his front was at least 3 to 1. He could leave the river to which the Turks must be tied owing to lack of transport and of mobile troops. Owing to the limitation imposed on him as to casualties, and owing to the fact that no further reinforcements were available, and that even he might have to spare the 13th Division for another area of operations, General Maude's main plan was to manœuvre the enemy out of his entrenched position, and to compel him to retreat. His object was not at first to destroy the force opposed to him. His operations were as follows: (1) Advance to the Hai, 13th to 16th December; (2) attempt to bridge the Tigris, 17th to 21st December; (3) preparations to clear the right bank of the Tigris, 22nd December to 6th January; (4) clearing the Khadairi Bend, 7th to 19th January; (5) capture of Hai triangle, 20th January to 5th February; (6) clearing the Dahra Bend, 6th to 16th February.

13th December. The 1st Corps with their headquarters at Sandy Ridge held from Suwaikiya Lake to Sinn Banks with the 7th Division north of the river opposite Sannaiyat, and the 3rd Division south of the river. The 3rd Corps was on the left of the 1st Corps, having the 14th Division holding the line Nasefiya Canal—Maqasis—Imamal—Mansur; the 13th Division was at Twin Canals. A line of barbed wire and blockhouses protected the southern flank.

After dark the 13th Division marched on Atab, the 14th Division moved forward at night, and formed defensive flanks to the 13th Division.

14th December. The 1st Corps continued to bombard the Sannaiyat position. The Flying Corps bombed the Turks as they were towing their bridge upstream from Shumran. They cut the pontoons adrift and scattered them. The Turks were then split up. Part of their force was north of the river, and part was south of it. By 06.00 hours the Cavalry Division had reached Basrugiya, west of the River Hai. Two brigades of the 14th Division reached Maqasis, and one brigade on the south of the 13th Division reached the Dujaila Redoubt.

The line gained was consolidated, and two bridges were constructed across the Hai at Atab. Then two brigades of the 13th Division moved up the eastern bank of the River Hai. Their advance was slow, as they were not in touch with the cavalry. There was little opposition to our advance.

15th December. The 3rd Corps advanced towards the Tigris with their right flank pivoting on Maqasis. They advanced about 2 miles with very little opposition, and in the evening the line was Maqasis—Kala Haji Fahan—Besouia—Atab.

The cavalry reached a position 2 miles west of Kala Haji Fahan before they were stopped by the Turks' rifle fire. They then withdrew to Umm-es-Saad.

16th December. The Cavalry Division made a reconnaissance towards the Shumran Bend. The 3rd Corps advanced to a position 1,000 yds. from the Turks at its nearest point. This position was consolidated. The Turks were possibly only a weak brigade, so that our Corps and cavalry division had an excellent opportunity of destroying them before they could be reinforced. The right bank of the River Tigris could then have been cleared. Later the enemy were able to make trenches, and it was costly to eject them from their positions. Our movements during this phase were slow and deliberate, so that the enemy had ample time in which to withdraw or to strengthen their forces and their positions.

17th December. The 3rd Corps extended its front 5 miles to the west of the River Hai.

18th December. Our positions gained were consolidated. The 1st and 3rd Corps bombarded the enemy's trenches. The Cavalry Division supported by two battalions of the 35th Brigade advanced towards the Shumran Bend to reconnoitre and to shell the bridge there. A few of the enemy were met and there was a skirmish. The cavalry then withdrew back to Besouia.

19th December. Bombardment of the enemy's positions at Kut and Sannaiyat continued. Preparations for crossing the Tigris on the 20th were carried out.

General Maude now decided to cut the Turks' communications. On this day he concentrated three columns for this operation. The main force, under General Crocker, consisting of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, the 40th Brigade, a field battery, and a bridging train, was to move off at 06.00 hours due west, until it was south of the brick kilns. Then Crocker was to advance due north and cross the Tigris, while another column, under General Thomson, consisting of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, the 35th Brigade, and two field batteries, advanced south and west of the Shumran bend, and shelled the enemy's bridge in this bend, and thus diverted the enemy's attention from General Crocker's crossing. A reserve consisting of the 37th Brigade composed the third column.

20th December. General Crocker moved off in the required direction by 07.30 hours. By noon his force was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the brick kilns, where a small party of the enemy was encountered. This party withdrew to the north, and was able to warn the Turks there of the approach of General Crocker's force. General Crocker advanced slowly on a narrow front up a nullah leading to his crossing-place, where the Turks had a battalion, a section of guns, and some machine guns. Crocker thus had an immense superiority of numbers, but on such a narrow front he could not develop fully the tactical power at his disposal. The enemy also were not surprised, as General Crocker had been operating for five hours in daylight. In addition, it would have been a difficult engineering feat in view of the enemy's opposition, although the Tigris was at its lowest, and its minimum width and pace. General Crocker ordered the crossing to be attempted, but the pontoon that was launched had all its occupants at once killed or wounded. General Crocker, who was in touch with G.H.Q. by wireless, received orders not to continue his attempt to cross the river, and he was ordered to withdraw. At 16.00 hours his force began to move back in a southerly direction. Six miles were covered before darkness came on, and a bivouac in the desert was made. The reason that General Maude gave for not continuing his operation was that he did not want to incur casualties.

Thomson's column, which had moved out at dawn, carried out its mission as ordered, and then withdrew. The General

Reserve moved up to support Crocker, and halted for the night 3 miles east of his force.

Intercommunication between the three columns was not adequately maintained owing to the operations being in a flat, featureless plain. Even if Crocker's column had been able to cross there was no large body of our troops available to block the enemy's line of retreat, as Maude now had his force disposed along a front of 30 miles, and he had no general reserve.

21st December. Nine aeroplanes made a raid on Bughaila, and dropped $\frac{3}{4}$ tons on the shipping. The 3rd Division reconnoitred the enemy's defences, and the North Lanes. and H.L.I. occupied a position on a 500 yds. front on the Tigris opposite the south-east end of the Kut peninsula. Defensive works were strengthened. A reserve line from Maqasis on the right to the Hai, and an intermediate line from Kala Haji Fahan was built. The G.O.C. Tigris Defences now took over the right bank as far as Immam al Mansur and the Dujaila Redoubt—Hai trenches. The 1st Corps was responsible for the trenches up to Maqasis.

General Maude now received information that he might incur casualties up to 25 per cent.

Owing, however, to the difficulties of supply to troops on the Hai, and to the weather, which showed signs of breaking, General Maude decided to establish himself firmly on the ground gained, and to watch for any opportunities that might offer to drive the Turks from their position on the right bank and to harass the enemy's communications by raids. Six bridges had been built across the Hai, and the extension of the light railway from Sinn Aftar to Atab had been begun.

General Maude had carried out his plan of establishing himself on the Hai with as few casualties as possible. His casualties had been 750, and he would be able adequately to maintain his troops in their position. It was still open to him to remain in his present position, and to consolidate to meet a possible counter-offensive by a reinforced enemy. The point now was whether it was worth while, in view of our heavy commitments on the Western Front, to try to force a decision, and whether the cost would be proportionate to the possible success.

General Maude decided to prepare for a deliberate trench attack in two steps. First he would reduce the Abdul Hasan position, and then he would capture the Hai bridge-head.

The trench line of the 3rd Division was advanced to within assaulting distance of the enemy's system up to the 6th January.

23rd December. The Cavalry Division left Besouia during the afternoon with the object of destroying Gassab's Fort, which was a base from which the Turks operated against our lines of communications.

24th December. The cavalry reached the vicinity of Gassab's Fort about dawn. The artillery opened fire at a range of 3,000 yds. before any attempt had been made to surround the fort. The result was that though the Turks had been surprised, they were able to escape as soon as the artillery fire opened. An opportunity of inflicting a heavy defeat and causing losses was thus allowed to slip away. The fort, however, was destroyed; arms, flocks, and grain were captured.

25th December. The Cavalry Division returned to Besouia. The 8th and 9th Brigades were detailed for the operation against the Khadairi Bend. They were to advance our line to within assaulting distance of the enemy's position. By this date our line was about 700 yds. from the enemy's front trench.

This advance had been made by sending forward detachments towards the enemy's position on compass bearings. These detachments dug in their positions, which on the following night were joined up into a continuous line.

26th December. Our line was advanced 300 yds.

The weather now broke, and rain fell steadily for a fortnight. The stream rose and spread over the countryside, so that our single line of railway, now extended to Atab, was worked with difficulty, and cavalry reconnaissance was hampered by the sodden ground.

27th December. During the night 27/28th, the 8th and 9th Brigades advanced and pushed trenches forward towards the enemy. On the following nights the ends of these trenches were joined up.

GENERAL SUMMARY

1917

By the middle of February the whole of the Turkish entrenched camp on the south bank had been cleared by our troops, and the Turks had withdrawn to the north bank.

The 1st Corps then attacked at Sannaiyat. After a series of frontal assaults these positions were carried when the 2nd Corps forced a passage across the Tigris at the Shumran bend. The Turks were then forced to abandon Kut and to retire in haste up the left bank of the river. The naval flotilla, hitherto blocked by the Turks at Sannaiyat, pushed on at full speed to the Nahr Kellak bend 50 miles above Kut. Here they came under a heavy fire from the Turkish rear-guard. They replied with fire from their 6-in. guns and finally converted the Turkish retreat into a rout. The *Sumana* was recaptured. Aziziya was reached on 1st March. Here Maude had to halt for some days to reorganize his administrative services. On 4th March the advance was continued. The Turks fell back behind the River Diyala. Maude bridged the Tigris, and by 11th March, 1917, the Union Jack was hoisted at Baghdad. The Turkish Commander withdrew his headquarters to Samarra. Our 13th Division reached Es Salekh on this day; the 14th Division concentrated north of the Diyala Bridge, and the 3rd Division remained at Bawi. The Russians were now in Erzeroum, Erzinjan, and Trebizond. It was necessary for General Maude to continue his advance on both banks of the River Tigris in order to defeat the remnants of the Turkish 18th Corps in our front, to seize the enemy's railhead, and to secure the country round Baghdad from inundation. He sent his 7th Division up the right bank and his 13th and 14th Divisions up the left bank.

Columns were then sent up both banks of the River Tigris, up the Euphrates, and also up the River Diyala to co-operate with the Russians, and to cut off the Turkish 13th Corps, and prevent them from joining the 18th Corps. The 7th Brigade was sent up the Euphrates, and the 8th and 9th Brigades up the River Diyala. By the 18th March General Keary's column, consisting of the 8th and 9th Brigades, had crossed the River Diyala 5 miles downstream of Baquba with the object of checking the retreat of the Turkish 13th Corps. Five days later this column was held up near the Jabal Hamrin by the Turkish opposition near the Ruz and Haruniyeh water-cuts. At the same time the Turks withstood the Russians' advance at the Pai Tak Pass, and withdrew a division via Qizil Robat, while the rest of their 13th Corps joined them from our front at the Jabal Hamrin. Our cavalry remained in touch with the 13th Corps at Deli Abbas which General Keary's force

occupied by the 31st March. On the 2nd April junction between the British and Russians was made, and we then marched back to Shahraban, as the 13th Corps had by this time extricated themselves. In the meantime by the 18th March, the 7th Brigade occupied Falluja on the River Euphrates and saved the dam at Bustan, while the Turks fell back on Ramadi.

General Maude now decided to resume his operations along the Tigris in order to reach Samarra as early as possible, and to control the 70-mile section of the Baghdad railway. By the 29th March the part of the Turks' 18th Corps on the left bank of the River Tigris had been driven back to the River Adhaim by the 13th Division.

Our troops were delayed on the River Adhaim by a part of the Turkish 13th Corps coming down from the Jabal Hamrin. They crossed the River Diyala north of Qizil Robat, and attacked our right flank. However, they were driven back by the 39th and 40th Brigades and cavalry after a running fight at Shialah into the Jabal Hamrin range, and the advance of our 7th Division continued along the railway from Baghdad, until the enemy was encountered on the Al Khubn ridge within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the enemy's trenches at Istabulat station where the Turks were strongly entrenched. On the 21st April we attacked this position and forced the Turks to evacuate it. Our 19th and 28th Brigades followed up, and with the cavalry captured Samarra by the 23rd April. On this date General Marshall's column was operating against the Turks' 13th Corps on the River Adhaim. On the following day our 38th Brigade attacked the Turkish 14th Division before it could be reinforced by their 2nd Division. The Turks withdrew towards the Jabal Hamrin. General Marshall's column with the 6th Cavalry Brigade gained contact with the enemy again and brought on the battle of Band-i-Adhaim on the 30th April. The 40th Brigade attacked the village behind the enemy's centre, supported on the left by the 35th Brigade. The enemy counter-attacked and retook the village, as a heavy sandstorm prevented adequate artillery support. Later we drove the Turks back and they withdrew north of Kifri.

We now controlled the Tigris, Euphrates, and the Diyala; the road to Persia was opened, and the Turkish 6th Army had been thoroughly defeated. During this fighting we had defeated the 13th Turkish Army Corps three times and the

18th Corps five times, driving it back over 60 miles and capturing 3,000 prisoners and 16 guns. The position of the whole force in Mesopotamia was comparatively safe. In April the Tigris troops were distributed in summer quarters. Early in June the Russians evacuated the line of the Diyala River and withdrew beyond Kerind towards Kermanshah. This necessitated a forward move on our part and accordingly we occupied Beled Ruz on the 23rd June. On the 8th July we advanced our line on the River Euphrates from Falluja a few miles upstream to the high ground on the right bank at Dhibhan, which dominates the left bank of the river at its junction with the Saklawie canal. The enemy were reported to be 1,000 Turks and 2,000 Arabs. On the 11th July the enemy's advanced positions were driven in, and we prepared for the final assault. A dust storm now sprang up. The order for the attack was therefore cancelled, and the next day the whole operation was abandoned. The Turks showed no signs of evacuating their position, and we withdrew to Dhibhan on the 14th July. Early in August the R.F.C. reported that the Turks were entrenching a position south-west of Shahraban. On the night 18/19th August two converging columns were dispatched from Beled Ruz and Baquba. On the 19th August Misdad was captured, and on the following day Shahraban was occupied. In September another attempt was made to deal with the Turks north-west of Falluja. General Brooking took elaborate steps to induce the enemy to expect an attack on his left, by the river; and to add to this idea the Euphrates was bridged lower down, and a road was constructed on the opposite bank, where supplies and troops were collected. Three miles below Ramadi the Turks held an advanced position on the Mushaid Ridge. Before daybreak on the 28th September this was outflanked; the enemy was driven into his main position. The cavalry, screened by the Mushaid Ridge, marched round the flanks, and after eight hours were astride the Aleppo road. The Turks were unable to break through the cavalry at night, and there was a general surrender on the following morning. The Turkish commander and 3,500 others were captured. In October it was decided to occupy the Jabal Hamrin astride the River Diyala in order to control the canals. General Marshall carried out this operation. On the 18th October the 40th Brigade occupied Deli Abbas; on the following day the 38th Brigade reached Mansuriyeh

and gained contact with the enemy on the right bank of the River Diyala, while the 36th and 37th Brigades worked along the Jabal Hamrin range on the enemy's flank. The Turks withdrew during the night and crossed the River Diyala. While these operations on the River Diyala were taking place the 18th Turkish Corps undertook a counter-demonstration towards Samarra. The Turks, however, were driven back. The 7th Division captured El Huweslat on the 24th October. On the 3rd November after a night march the 28th Brigade attacked at daybreak and captured Maashad-ad-Daur. The 21st Brigade occupied Daur after a 20-mile march. Tekrit was captured at 4 a.m. on the 6th November. The main body of our troops was at once ordered back to Samarra. On the 18th November General Maude died. His reputation was a fine one. He was as patient and methodical in conceiving a plan as he was determined in executing it. General Marshall now succeeded General Maude. His position was a strong one. His army was now confident, and morally and physically fit. The Turks had been constantly defeated and were demoralized and inert at Kifri, Kirkuk, Tekrit, and Hit.

These remnants of the 18th and 13th Corps were also greatly inferior in numbers, morale, and material to his army. His main policy could now be a defensive one. The chief strategical interest was now attached to the Palestine campaign where the Turks had an opportunity of launching another offensive.

Both on the Euphrates and on the Tigris the Turks had retreated out of rapid striking distance.

It was only on the right flank about 60 miles from Baghdad, where part of the 13th Turkish Corps held the passes over the Jabal Hamrin guarding the northern route to Mosul, that there seemed a chance of striking the enemy. After a night march converging columns under General Egerton surprised the enemy at dawn on 3rd December, and drove them along the Mosul road through Kifri.

As a result of the operation the British remained in the Sakaltutan Pass, from which there was observation over the country to the north. There were no further operations in 1917.

1917

5th January. Our line was now within assaulting distance of the enemy's position, being within 200 yds. of it. At a cost

of 350 casualties we advanced to assaulting distance on a frontage of 3,500 yds. General Maude adopted this slow method as he considered that it was necessary not to risk a reverse, as he knew by experience the power of the Turks when in entrenched positions.

6th January. Orders were issued for the assault on the Khadairi Bend position. On the next two days there was to be considerable bombardment against the enemy's positions, and the wire in front of them was to be cut. The attack was to be carried out on the 9th January while the 7th Division raided the Sannaiyat position, held by 9 battalions and 19 guns, with 3 battalions and 12 guns in reserve. The 3rd Corps were to demonstrate against the Hai bridge-heads system, where the Turks had 6 battalions and 21 guns, and to send a force to the Shumran bend. The cavalry was to raid Bughaila. It was estimated that the Turks had 6 battalions and 8 guns in the vicinity of Shumran and Bughaila.

9th January. The orders were carried out except for the operations against Shumran and Bughaila, which had to be abandoned owing to the thick mist preventing co-operation and observation. At 09.00 hours, when the fire of 64 guns (including 6 howitzers) had lifted their bombardment from the enemy's front line, the 7th, 8th, and 9th Brigades assaulted the southern half of the enemy's forward system on a front of 800 yds. This position was captured by 09.00 hours and consolidation was started.

At 10.00 hours the enemy counter-attacked. There was considerable hand-to-hand fighting, and the battle was closely contested, especially on our open right flank. The enemy pressed their attacks most vigorously, but were unable to gain ground.

10th January. Our front was extended to include the whole of the enemy's forward positions. The Turkish enfilade and cross fire was so effective that we were unable to capture their second line.

11th January. We made two unco-ordinated attacks. One battalion attacked on our left by the river, and one battalion attacked on our right from Abdul Hassan. These separate attacks were severely dealt with from each flank by artillery fire, and were driven back by the Turks' counter-attacks. The situation now became a series of local hand-to-hand fights, in which we suffered 1,639 casualties. General Maude

wrote as follows on the subject: "In spite of his tenacity the enemy had more than met his match in the dash and resolution of our troops, and had learned a lesson, which was to become more deeply ingrained on subsequent occasions."

It was not, however, until seven days later that the Turks realized the hopelessness of their resistance and withdrew across the river.

This was the first occasion on which we had driven the enemy from an entrenched position.

19th January. The Turks evacuated their trenches in the Khadairi Bend.

General Maude now considered the problem of clearing the Turks from the Hai salient. He estimated that as he had very great general superiority over the enemy, especially in mounted troops and in air force, he could proceed with his frontal attacks without any anxiety as to his flanks and communications. Even if the enemy was reinforced he was confident of being able to deal with any hostile opposition either on the Tigris or the Euphrates.

22nd January. The cavalry were sent north of the River Tigris to move round the Suwaikiya Marsh. The ground, however, was too boggy, and precluded any possibility of threatening the enemy's lines of communication from this area.

25th January. After thirteen days of preparation we had pushed forward our trenches to within 400 yds. of the enemy's position, held by 3,700 Turks in the Hai triangle. The attack starting at 09.30 hours was carried out by the 39th and 40th Brigades, each on a 900 yds. front, advancing on either side of the Hai river.

They were supported by 74 guns and 30 howitzers. The 9th Brigade held the Corps front from the forming-up position to Atab. This was necessary owing to the action of hostile Arabs. The Turks' front line was captured in the first rush. The enemy then made determined counter-attacks, and drove back our troops on the west bank with a loss to us of 1,100 casualties.

It must be noted that no attempt was made to obtain a tactical or strategical surprise. The attack was made on a narrow front in broad daylight against a strongly entrenched position, the initial assault being made with only a sixth part of the available troops. The enemy was thus able to concentrate to repel the attack on this small frontage, which

gave us no scope for the employment of all available fire power. A wider front of attack for the two divisions against both sides of the Hai triangle should have enabled General Marshall to drive in the salient at one assault. As it was, the trench operations were slow and costly, and were not pressed vigorously. The methodical reduction of the enemy's positions in each bend of the river in turn from east to west certainly caused the Turks to stretch out their forces from Sannaiyat to a dangerous extent, especially as the enemy had no means of crossing the river, and his transport and supply arrangements were so much inferior to ours that he could make little use of his position on interior lines with his left flank tied to the Sannaiyat lines. The enemy's resistance was facilitated by their immediate local counter-attacks which they were able to put in against open flanks due to our attacks being on small frontages.

26th January. The 14th Division on the west bank, and the 13th Division on the east bank, each on a 900 yds. front, continued to attack the enemy opposed to them in the Hai position. This attack was completely successful, and the enemy's first and second lines were captured.

Pressure was maintained, and these initial successes were extended until the whole of the enemy's forward zone to a depth of 1,000 yds. was in our possession by the 31st January.

1st February. Further attacks were carried out. Two Sikh battalions advanced to attack on a 500 yds. front. They were counter-attacked in the open, and the result was a simultaneous bayonet charge. During the night 1/2nd February the 8th Brigade took over the position east of the River Hai held by the 13th Division.

3rd February. The 13th Division from Besouia came up on the left rear of the 14th Division.

The Cavalry Division operated towards Shumran. It is possible that this reconnaissance could have been more efficiently performed by a squadron. They would then have been free to make full use of the special characteristics of cavalry, namely, concentration and mobility to place their greatly superior numbers at a decisive point.

The 8th Brigade during the day cleared the enemy from the east bank of the River Hai.

4th February. During the night 4/5th February the Turks, with 6,500 rifles and 14 guns, evacuated the Hai position, and took up a new position in the Dahra bend from the

Liquorice Factory to Yusifiya round the Shumran bend. About Kut and the Shumran the Turks had a further 1,800 rifles and 46 guns.

General Maude had now cleared the right bank of the Tigris of the enemy up to and including the line of the Hai.

His casualties up to date had been 8,524. The Turks' defences south of the River Tigris now covered 2 miles of front.

6th February. Preparations began for the attack on the new position. The Liquorice Factory, where there was a nest of machine guns, was kept under constant bombardment.

9th February. The 39th Brigade attacked the centre of the enemy's position. The King's Own gained ground in their assault, and finally 1,800 yds. of the enemy's front system was captured and held in spite of counter-attacks.

The Cavalry Division operated towards Shumran, but was able to do little, although the Turks between Shumran to Bughaila had only 900 rifles and 6 guns.

10th February. In spite of high wind and dust storms there was a general forward movement, and the 14th Division captured the Liquorice Factory.

11th February. We reached the Tigris south-east of the Shumran bend, and so now we enclosed the enemy. General Marshall decided to attack the Turkish right centre.

15th February. During the past three days the enemy had been driven from his advanced posts. Trenches and approaches had been constructed towards the enemy's main position.

The weather now broke, and the heavy rain rendered movement very difficult. However, our efficient counter-battery work saved the infantry many casualties. We feinted against the Turkish left while the assault was driven in on a broad front by the Welsh Fusiliers and South Wales Borderers against the enemy's right centre. Our barrage fire prevented them from transferring to the right centre the men they had sent to deal with our original feint. The Buffs and Dogras carried the enemy's front on his left centre, and then they advanced north-east towards the River Tigris, and isolated the Turkish left. A final assault delivered on the whole front by all available troops of the 3rd Corps was completely successful in driving the enemy out of their positions, except for a strip of land held by a small body of the enemy. The whole bend was soon captured with 2,000

prisoners. General Maude wrote as follows of this operation: "Thus terminated a phase of severe fighting brilliantly carried out. To eject the enemy from that horseshoe bend, bristling with trenches, and commanded across the river on three sides by hostile batteries and machine guns, called for offensive qualities of a high standard on the part of the troops.

"That such good results were achieved was due to heroism and determination of the infantry, and to the close and ever present support rendered by the artillery, whose accurate fire was assisted by efficient aeroplane observation."

During this period the Turkish commander had continued to underrate the fighting qualities of the M.E.F.; he dispersed his force by holding positions on the south bank, and he still wished to operate through Persia against our lines of communication.

In the Caucasus at this time the Russians were planning an offensive against the Turkish Second Army, and also an advance toward Samarra, Mosul, and Baghdad.

In north-west Persia they were considering an advance through Khanikin against the rear of the Turkish 18th Corps on the Tigris. General Maude intended to continue at once the operations in the Dahra Bend, in order to clear the enemy from the Nahr-al-Massag and Imam Mahdi on the right bank, while the 1st Corps attacked Sannaiyat, where the enemy had 3,000 rifles and 19 guns.

Owing, however, to the heavy rain, the attack south of the river had to be abandoned, the whole country had been turned into a quagmire, making movement very difficult.

17th February. An attack was made at Sannaiyat. The original orders were for the 21st Brigade to make an attack on a two-battalion front of 350 yds. at noon. There was to be no preliminary bombardment. The original attack had to be postponed for two hours. It was then completely successful, and the objectives were captured. The 21st Brigade was to have been relieved by the 19th Brigade who was then to have carried forward the advance. The Turks, however, counter-attacked along the river bank supported by accurate artillery fire at 15.30 hours, and drove back the two assaulting battalions to their original trenches. There was so much disorganization that the attack could not be renewed. Our casualties were 500.

Preparation was now carried on to force the crossing at

the Shumran on the 23rd February by the 2nd Corps, while the 1st Corps renewed the attack on Sannaiyat 30 hours before the main crossing took place.

The 13th Division took over all the protective duties to enable the 14th Division to concentrate, and to practise the crews of pontoons in their duties, and to carry out feints and ruses to mystify and mislead the enemy.

The following preparations were then made: The 14th Divisional Artillery and the 38th Brigade moved to the west of Nahr-al-Massag to protect the left flank.

The 37th Brigade, who were to carry out the crossing, divided their battalions into three parties to cross at the three ferries, each with 13 pontoons. The Norfolks were to cross at No. 1 Ferry, the 2/9 Gurkhas at No. 2 Ferry, and the 1/2 Gurkhas at No. 3. When the crossing had been made and the covering party had been posted, a bridge was to be constructed, and the 36th Brigade and then the 35th Brigade were to cross. To mystify the Turks and mislead them as to the actual point of crossing, the 3rd Division were to carry out a raid across the river at Maqasis after 19.00 hours on the evening before the main operation at the southern end of the Shumran, where the river was 340 yds. wide and the beach on the far side was shelving, suitable for landing troops there. Two battalions on the northern flank advanced their strong points during daylight, in order to induce a belief that the chief attack was to take place there.

All reconnaissances and preparatory measures at the selected point of crossing were carried out after dark, and active daylight work was carried out at the Liquorice Factory.

21st February. The 1st Corps was abnormally active at Sannaiyat.

The river was still too high for a crossing to be carried out with reasonable security. The cavalry obtained information that there were no considerable bodies of the enemy for 16 miles west of Shumran on the southern bank. Khalil Pasha still did not appreciate the situation, and did not realize the danger to his attenuated line on the north bank which was now to be assailed at both ends. He had, in addition, failed to make any plans for covering Baghdad or even to maintain the old five positions between Aziziya and Baghdad constructed in the previous year. Nor did he adequately reinforce the 18th Corps though they were on a 25-mile front, and had incurred 3,000 casualties, thereby

reducing their effective strength to 10,300 rifles. Now the snows in the mountains and the activity of the Russians in north-west Persia prevented Khalil from sending troops down in time to save the 18th Corps in their present widely dispersed position, faced by a force four times as strong and with much greater means of movement, and consequently of striking at any point

Karabekir had in his 18th Corps 10,300 rifles and 91 guns to oppose General Maude's 46,000 rifles and 174 guns.

Of his available force the greatest strength was concentrated at Sannaiyat, namely, 3,000 rifles and 19 guns. He thus had no great strength at any part of his line.

On this day the Cavalry Division was at Besouia. The 14th Division was concentrated at Kala Haji Fahan. The 13th Division and one Brigade of the 1st Corps were between the Hai and the Massag Canal. The 7th Division and two battalions of the 3rd Division were opposite Sannaiyat. The 3rd Division, less $1\frac{1}{2}$ brigades, was on the south bank between Sannaiyat and the Hai.

22nd February. The Sannaiyat position was again assaulted. At 06.00 hours the 19th Brigade was to attack under a barrage while the 28th Brigade contained the Turks farther north.

The attack had to be postponed for four hours as the troops were not ready at the appointed hour. The two attacking battalions captured their objectives without difficulty, supported effectively by the enfilade fire of 34 guns on the right bank and also by 33 guns on the left bank and by the Divisional machine gun company. Half an hour after midday the Turks made their inevitable counter-attack. They advanced along the river bank and drove back an Indian battalion to their original front-line trench.

In doing this, however, the Turks suffered heavily from the enfilade fire of our artillery on the south bank. This counter-attack disorganized our arrangements, so that the second phase of the battle, namely, the assault of the enemy's position by the 28th Brigade north of the 19th Brigade was not begun till 15.15 hours. This assault, however, was successful, and was continued up to the enemy's second line to the right of the 19th Brigade.

Our position in the first two lines at Sannaiyat was maintained in spite of the Turks' counter-attacks. Unfortunately this success was not exploited till 13.00 hours on the following

day. This may have been due to the casualties and disorganization caused by the Turks' counter-attacks, but it must be noted that the Divisional Commander had the 8th and 21st Brigades at hand, and that they had not been engaged. Again, it must be noted that the preparations for the original assault were not adequate, and that again zero had to be postponed. We thus lost any possibility of making a dawn attack, which may be demoralizing. Also, although we could see the enemy massing for counter-attacks, the artillery was not able to bring sufficient weight of fire to bear to stop them. This was due to the difficulty of observation, and also to the high standard of the Turks' morale.

Actually on this Sannaiyat front the pursuit of the enemy did not commence till after the Turks had evacuated their fifth line of trenches; fifteen hours after the 14th Division had started to cross the Shumran bridge.

By the night of the 22nd all preparations for the crossing of the Tigris by the 14th Division were completed. Little was known of the enemy's dispositions, as there had been no reconnaissance of the enemy's movements near the point of crossing in order not to lead the enemy to suspect where the crossing was to be made. The point of crossing was well chosen (*a*) as it denied to the enemy any effective observation from their position at Dahra Ridges on the northern end of the Shumran Peninsula, (*b*) it was at the extreme end of the 25 miles of positions to which the enemy were tied as long as they held the Sannaiyat trenches on their left flank, (*c*) we should be able to bring converging fire to bear on the enemy opposing our crossing in the salient, (*d*) we should be able to extend the bridge-head rapidly with secure flanks.

During the night 22/23rd the 40th Brigade made a feint crossing at the Liquorice Factory. This caused the Turks to move troops into the Kut peninsula.

The 39th Brigade took up a position at the Nahr-al-Massag to cover the 14th Divisional Artillery. The 37th Brigade, with their three pontoon parties and specially trained rowers, and the bridging train, took up their positions at the three ferries.

23rd February. At 05.30 hours the three battalions of the 37th Brigade each started to launch their 13 pontoons. The enemy was completely surprised, as it was not until 06.30 hours that their artillery began to shell the river line. At No. 1 Ferry the Norfolks got across the river safely and

quickly gained a covering position about 100 yds. north of the river. At 2 and 3 ferries the pontoons were caught by machine gun and rifle fire, and only a portion of them were able to reach the far bank, and eventually 2 and 3 ferries had to stop working.

The Norfolks and the Gurkhas detachment of $1\frac{1}{2}$ companies maintained their position. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ Gurkhas advanced 700 yds. in a north-easterly direction during the morning, effectively covered by our artillery.

Our artillery was able to break up the enemy's counter-attack down the centre of the peninsula during the morning.

The resistance of the enemy slackened after the failure of their counter-attack. The 38th Brigade was able to start crossing the river at 14.00 hours after the last battalion of the 37th Brigade had crossed. The 38th Brigade was then brought up to a position of readiness where the bridge was being constructed. The bridge construction over the River Tigris was commenced at 07.20 hours, and in spite of the enemy's artillery, of the strong current, the 340 yds. of river in flood, and the delay caused by taking precautions against floating mines, it was open for traffic by 16.30 hours. By nightfall our infantry of the 14th Division had secured a position 2,000 yds. in depth covering the bridge-head. Ahead of this secured position patrols were acting vigorously against the enemy's advanced detachments who had suffered heavily, including 700 prisoners and 5 machine guns taken. The success of this crossing was due to thorough preparation, to secrecy, excellent technical arrangements for the R.E., R.A., and machine guns, to the simultaneous crossing at three points, and to the effective feints.

On the 7th Division front at Sannaiyat the Turkish third and fourth lines were captured. Their attack started at 13.30 hours on a two-brigade front, with the 19th Brigade, as before, north of the river, and the 28th Brigade on their right. The 19th Brigade met with considerable opposition, and were unable to gain their objective in the enemy's fourth line till 17.30 hours. This delay and disorganization may have caused the 7th Divisional Commander to stop at the fourth line when it was captured. However, it was vitally important for him to exploit his success, and to prevent the enemy from reinforcing the troops at Dahra Ridge who were able to oppose our troops who were establishing their positions in the Shumran peninsula, and were covering

the crossing of the 14th Division. The G.O.C. 7th Division still had two fresh brigades at his disposal with which to push on, and so to give the 3rd Corps the best possible chance of cutting off the enemy. Actually during the afternoon the Turks were able to withdraw some battalions from the Sannaiyat front towards the Dahra Ridge, and although the crossing was successfully carried out 25 miles west of Sannaiyat, yet owing to this lack of pressure by the 7th Division the bulk of the enemy avoided capture.

24th February. During the night 23/24th the Turks withdrew from their fifth line at Sannaiyat. At dawn the 7th Division occupied the vacated position, and over-ran the Turkish positions at Nakhailat and Suwada. General Cobbe entered Kut unopposed, and the gunboats came upstream from Fallahiya and anchored off the town, where ten months before the *Julnar* had failed to run the blockade.

Before midnight 23/24th the whole of the 14th Division had crossed the Tigris at a cost of 350 casualties. The 13th Division was close up on the right bank at this time.

At 06.15 hours the 36th and 37th Brigades of the 14th Division attacked the enemy on the Dahra Ridges after an artillery bombardment. These ridges made a strong position 20 ft. above the level of the ground. The attack was made over 3,000 yds. of open ground. Both Brigades advanced steadily to their front, and in an hour's time had gained positions on the Dahra Ridge and Barracks. There was a gap on both flanks between the river and the nearest troops. It was against these gaps on the left of the 37th Brigade that the enemy massed for a counter-attack. This movement was broken up by our artillery fire, and eventually the 35th Brigade came up on the left of the 37th Brigade, and caused the Turks to withdraw.

The cavalry, on arrival at the bridge on the south bank at 09.10 hours, received orders to cross the Tigris and take up a vigorous pursuit towards Bughaila on the left bank. It was not until 11.00 hours, however, that they were about to cross the enemy's positions on the Dahra Ridge.

The 7th Cavalry Brigade moved then about 2 miles north of the Dahra Barracks before changing direction in a westerly direction, which must have been the line which the enemy would take in their withdrawal on Baghdad. The 6th Cavalry Brigade followed their 7th Brigade, keeping a mile behind them. At 13.00 hours it was reported by the R.F.C. that the

enemy were taking up a position in the Dry Channel running into the Tigris a mile from the western end of the Dahra Ridge, and that they were estimated to be 1,500 strong with 6 guns.

It was not until 15.00 hours that the two Cavalry Brigades were engaged with the enemy in this channel in a dismounted attack. No attempt was made to make full use of the mobility of the cavalry by making a turning movement, although this channel did not extend for more than 2 miles in a northerly direction. The Cavalry Division was held up by the enemy for the rest of the day, and withdrew back to bivouac at 18.00 hours. Had the cavalry been boldly handled they might have gained a decisive result, as the Turks in the channel were a rearguard to their main body, reported to be 10 miles farther west on the way to Baghdad at 13.00 hours.

The 7th Division did not start their advance till 10.00 hours, although G.H.Q. had ordered the 1st and 3rd Corps to push on vigorously. This Division reached Suwada at noon. Here a position was taken up to include Ataba Marsh. The 8th Brigade remained with the 7th Division. The 3rd Division (less the 3rd Brigade) remained in position in the vicinity of Imam Ul Mansur-Atab.

It was estimated that 6,200 Turks of the 18th Corps were able to withdraw from our front towards Baghdad. Turkish reinforcements, i.e. part of a regiment reached Bughaila on this day.

Our losses since the 21st February had been 2,750.

25th February. The R.F.C. reported that early in the morning the Turks' main body was at Bughaila, and that their rearguard, consisting of 1,700 rifles and 20 guns, was occupying a dry canal at Imam Mahdi. Again on this day the cavalry missed an opportunity of striking a decisive blow against the enemy as located. They did not make use of their mobility to turn the enemy's flank. Instead they gained contact with the enemy near the river at 11.30 hours and were engaged in a frontal attack so closely that they could not extricate themselves from the enemy till 17.30 hours, when they had to return to the river to water their horses.

The Turks at this hour also started to withdraw, leaving 300 dead and 340 prisoners; they had, however, checked our pursuit, and we had 450 casualties.

The 13th Division was involved with the cavalry in the frontal attacks on the enemy's main position.

26th February. Our gunboats pressed on past the Turkish rearguards, capturing several vessels, among them the *Sumana* and H.M.S. *Firefly*, taken by the Turks during General Townshend's retreat from Ctesiphon.

The 3rd Corps reached Bughaila with little opposition, and the Cavalry Division went on as far as the Nahr Kellak, but they lost touch with the enemy. General Maude in his Dispatches writes: "Stripping themselves of guns and other encumbrances the Turks just evaded our troops."

27th February. The 3rd Corps reached the Nahr Kellak. The 1st Corps reached Shaikh Saad. The troops were now on half-rations owing to the difficulty of navigation in getting supplies up from Shaikh Jaad.

The cavalry on reaching Aziziya, which was occupied by 2,000 Turks with 10 guns, retired.

28th February. The administrative arrangements now had to be reorganized. Pursuit, therefore, had to cease, although the opportunity was lost of crushing the 18th Corps before they could organize further resistance.

General Maude described the situation in Dispatches as follows: "Since crossing the Tigris we had captured some 4,000 prisoners of whom 188 were officers, 39 guns, 22 trench mortars, 11 machine guns, H.M.S. *Firefly*, *Sumara*, *Pioneer*, *Basra*, and several smaller vessels, besides 10 barges, pontoons, and other bridging material, quantities of rifles, bayonets, equipment, ammunition, and explosives, vehicles, and miscellaneous stores of all kinds. In addition the enemy threw into the river or otherwise destroyed several guns and much war material."

1st March. The cavalry were able to occupy Aziziya, while the gunboats also came up to this place. The 3rd Corps arrived in the vicinity of Aziziya, as did also the Navy and the R.F.C. The 1st Corps was at Shaikh Saad.

General Maude's instructions now were to get into touch with the Russians, and that he was free to conduct future operations as it was not previously realized how complete his victory had been.

General Maude was now at liberty to act. His difficulty must have been to consider how far he could utilize the man-power and resources of the Empire in a subsidiary theatre of war. Our ration strength in Mesopotamia was half

a million, whereas the enemy's ration strength was ten times less. Therefore, their force of 50,000 was carrying out the rôle of a detachment by containing more men than its own strength.

All our available strength was required at the decisive time and place on the Western Front to deal with our main enemy.

The decision for General Maude was a difficult one. If he continued his pursuit to Baghdad he would have to go beyond it in order to hold it, and the three approaches to it via Falluja, Samarra, and the River Diyala.

This would entail increased administrative services, more casualties, and consequently reinforcements of men and material urgently required for the prosecution of our main effort in France.

However, General Maude reported that he considered that it was vital for us to move on Baghdad at once, before the Turks reformed and brought up fresh troops.

As soon as the supply situation was assured and he was in a position to maintain a Cavalry Division and four divisions, he intended, therefore, to resume his advance. His proposal was sanctioned, with the added suggestion that he should hold Falluja—Istabulat—Baquba, and Deli Abbas.

5th March. The advance was renewed. General Marshall's column marched 18 miles to Zor.

The Cavalry Division advanced towards Lajj. During their march the R.F.C. and armoured cars reported that the enemy were in position south-east of Lajj, and that a column 600 strong was retiring north-west. During a lull in the dust storm that had been raging all day the 7th Cavalry Brigade found that they were within rifle range of the Turkish trenches. "Here," writes General Maude, "the Turkish rearguard was found in an entrenched position, very difficult to locate by reason of a dense dust storm that was blowing, and of a network of nalas with which the country is intersected. The cavalry was hotly engaged with the enemy in this locality throughout the day, and took some prisoners.

"A noticeable feature of the day's work was a brilliant charge, mounted, by the Hussars straight into the Turkish trenches.

"The enemy retreated during the night."

The details of the cavalry encounter are that the 13th Hussars charged towards the retreating enemy intending to

pursue them to Lajj. They rode over the advanced trenches, but were checked when they reached the main nullah forming the Turks' position. They wheeled to the east and withdrew, and then reformed and advanced dismounted, covered by their own rifle fire. The 6th Brigade now advanced against the enemy's left and rear, and tried to work round their position on the north-west, but they found that this flank was thrown well back.

However, the Turks became apprehensive as to their line of retreat, and evidently thought that they were in danger of being cut off, and consequently they withdrew. Our casualties were 9 officers and 85 other ranks.

The action of the 13th Hussars was a determining factor that helped to hasten our advance on Baghdad. The Cavalry Division withdrew to half way between Lajj and Zor.

6th March. The cavalry advanced through another dust storm to Bawi.

3rd Corps reached Ctesiphon.

The 7th Division arrived at Zor. The 3rd Division reached Aziziya.

On the line of the River Diyala, the Turks were holding a position on the right bank on a front of 13 miles. They had destroyed the bridge over the River Diyala. Khalil Pasha had, however, arranged no co-ordinated system of defence with organized inundation of the surrounding country. His force, therefore, was unable to hold a sufficient frontage to prevent its flanks being turned. Yet he had ample time for delaying our advance during the three days that General Maude was halting in order to reorganize his administrative system.

The Turkish Commander was undecided as to his course of action. First he made a very long personnel withdrawal to Baghdad after our crossing of the Tigris, and decided not to halt the 18th Corps there, but to defend Samarra. Then he decided to halt the 18th Corps at Aziziya.

There was no time to prepare a defensive position for the execution of this order. Therefore, Karabekir Bey continued to retire to Lajj and Ctesiphon. Khalil ordered the 18th Corps Commander to prepare a defensive position at Ctesiphon, while he sent his 14th Division to prepare the line of the River Diyala with a supporting position in the rear between Tel Mahomed and Qarara. A small defensive position only was to be constructed on the right bank of

the River Diyala between the River Tigris and Umm-at-Tabul. Then he made another decision, namely, to hold a line on the right bank between the River Tigris and Tel Aswad.

This line, however, was too extended for Karabekir to hold with the 2,300 men available for this defence.

He could have been contained while we transferred the bulk of our forces to the right bank of the Tigris, where there were no defensive positions. Baghdad was then open to attack from the west.

Khalil accordingly decided to hold the shorter line between the Tigris and Umm-at-Tabul. Work was started again on this line just as our forces were approaching the River Diyala.

Had the Turkish Commander dammed the Diyala 20 miles upstream, he could have prevented us from making a turning movement from the north-east. His line on the River Diyala would have been limited to 14 miles. On the right bank of the Tigris he could then have occupied a line between Tel Aswad and the river, with another position in the rear to cover the ground up to lake Aqarquf.

7th March. The 13th Division reached the River Diyala. The advance guard commander of the 13th Division decided to attempt to cross the River Diyala after dark. His force consisted of the 38th Brigade, the 66th Brigade Field Artillery, and a part of the No. 2 Bridging Train. Support was to have been given by the 35th Brigade from the right bank near Shaikh Aswad with a field battery and a field company R.E. However, this supporting force did not reach its allotted position at Aswad until noon on the 8th March. Without this support from the right bank of the river, without adequate covering fire, without reconnaissance, without any feints, alternative crossing-places, or thorough preparation or organization or reconnaissance of this river 120 yds. wide with a current of 2 miles an hour, the result was that the enemy were not surprised. There was no time to do more than find a suitable point to which to bring the pontoons down to the river, as in most places this was not possible owing to the high banks.

The place where the steep banks were conveniently ramped was where the Turks had previously had a bridge, and it was the place where they expected us to try to cross the river, and consequently where they were on the look-out for our

approach. There was nearly a full moon at the time, and when the first pontoon was launched at midnight the enemy opened heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. It had been hoped that the Turks would retire on our approach, as it was thought that the enemy in the vicinity was only a weak and disorganized rearguard.

Preparation and reconnaissance would have caused delay, and it was hoped to gain time. This fact to some extent justified the attempt.

Actually the crossing of the river was not effected until the night 9/10th March. On this first night all further attempts were abandoned by 04.00 hours, when the force withdrew 2 miles south.

During the day the 1st Corps Headquarters and 7th Division reached Bustan, and the 3rd Division arrived at Zor.

No. 2 Bridging Train constructed a bridge across the Tigris at Bawi.

The Cavalry Division reconnoitred up the Diyala and found that the right bank was held by the 44th Regiment, and one battalion for 10 miles north of the River Tigris, and farther north by 250 sabres.

The 36th Brigade was sent 6 miles up the River Diyala to attempt to cross the river, but with orders that if they found that the river was strongly held they were not to attempt a crossing.

8th March. The Cavalry Division crossed the River Tigris at Bawi by 18.00 hours. The 7th Division had also crossed by 19.30 hours. The difficulty of advancing was now considerable, and it was consequently slow owing to the numerous water cuts at right angles to the line of advance, and owing to the inaccuracy of the maps and lack of previous reconnaissance.

On the left bank of the River Tigris soon after midnight the 38th Brigade attempted to cross the River Diyala. We were able to bombard the troops of the 44th regiment holding the right bank and for a short time the ferries were able to work. A hundred men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment were able to cross and to form a bridge-head in a small semi-circular bend in the river, 50 yds. wide and 25 yds. deep. The bank on the western side of their position had a command of 6 ft. over the ground across which the Turks would have to advance in order to attack. In this position the Loyal

North Lancs repulsed five counter-attacks by the 44th and 51st Regiments during the night.

The 36th Brigade was unable to cross higher up the river at the Sarima Police Post.

9th March. The 37th Brigade relieved the 36th Brigade. The Loyal North Lancs' detachment maintained their position, though they had 60 casualties during the 24 hours, but they inflicted heavy loss on the 44th Regiment.

On the right bank of the River Tigris the Cavalry Division soon after daybreak arrived at Shawa Khara in the vicinity of the Tel Aswad position, which the R.F.C. reported to be occupied by the enemy. They contained the Turks in their position until relieved by the 28th Brigade. Then they moved out in a westerly direction in order to outflank the enemy. The Turks' right flank, however, was extended back to Umm at Tabul, and so the cavalry, not being able to envelop this flank, withdrew to water their horses. The 28th Brigade then attempted to outflank the enemy.

One battalion was sent to make a frontal attack, and two battalions were sent round the Turks' right flank. The 19th Brigade also operated on this western flank, and the 35th Brigade came up on the right of the battalion of the 28th Brigade making the frontal attack. Later in the day the cavalry returned and took up a position west of the 19th Brigade, but they took no active part in the operations. Later the cavalry withdrew again to Shaikh Aswad.

These operations on the right bank caused the Turks to withdraw the bulk of their 51st Division during the night 9/10th March, leaving only one regiment, one battalion, and a weak cavalry regiment to guard the River Diyala by means of a chain of posts along the river bank. They now had no active defence on the river, as their available reserves in this area were improving the Tel Mahomed position in rear.

During the night 9/10th March, the 38th Brigade with the Wiltshire Regiment were able to establish two battalions across the Diyala.

10th March. By 10.30 hours a bridge across the mouth of the River Diyala had been prepared. The 39th Brigade crossed and followed by the 40th Brigade advanced on Baghdad.

On this day the Turks gave up the attempt to defend Baghdad, retiring past the city towards the north-west.

The Cavalry Division advanced towards Tel Ramal, west

of the 7th Division, moving in the direction of the Khar Iron Bridge to Baghdad.

The Turks during the night retired back to a line covering the railway station with their left on the Tigris and their right flank at Umm-at-Tabul. At 09.00 hours a dust storm started, and became so heavy by midday that visibility was less than 50 yds., and operations were at a standstill. At this time the 19th Brigade had its right flank on the railway of Khar Bridge, the 35th Brigade was on its right flank, and the Cavalry Division on its left flank advancing on Tel Atab.

Khalil Pasha on hearing that his 14th Division had withdrawn from the Tel Mahomed position on his left flank, and on seeing the cavalry making an enveloping movement on his right flank, issued orders at 20.00 hours for a general retreat as the bridge across the Tigris had been broken in the storm, and there was now no means of mutual support between his forces on both sides of the river. The Turks started to withdraw at 23.00 hours, and in spite of the fact that they were disorganized by continuous pressure and the dust storm, and were without signalling equipment, and means of intercommunication, transport, and material, and after being in close contact with us for four days, they managed to withdraw now without further casualties.

11th March. The Black Watch reached Baghdad station by 05.50 hours with the whole of the 7th Division advancing behind them. The cavalry and the 6th Brigade occupied Kazimain.

While the troops were occupying the city the gunboat flotilla, with mine-sweepers ahead, proceeded up the river. General Maude and his Staff going with the flotilla, and arriving at the citadel soon after the troops. With the capture of Baghdad we had gained the southern terminus of the unfinished Baghdad railway, the first section of which had been completed as far north as Samarra. Baghdad was the centre of six routes in the Mesopotamian plain, and through it ran the highway to Persia north-east along the Diyala river to Khanikin, and then through the valleys of the Median range to Hamadan on the Persian plateau. Here was Baratov's Russian force consisting of a Division and some Cossacks. For a year now they had been in this area 100 miles from their base at Kasvin. In 1916 they had established themselves at Hamadan, and then had occupied Kermanshah and Karina.

When the Turks occupied Kut they sent their 13th Corps up the River Diyala and drove the Russians to the east of Hamadan.

Here they remained for the rest of 1916. The Turks had posts in the northern mountains at Senna (120 miles north of Kermanshah), and elsewhere in this vicinity, and since they were secure on the River Tigris they could at any moment launch a force against the isolated Russians. Our advance at the beginning of 1917 changed the situation. When we entered Kut on the 24th February the 13th Corps fell back on Hamadan. They did not attempt to hold the pass of Said Abad, and by the time Baghdad fell they were in Kermanshah.

Now if General Maude's force pushing up the River Diyala could reach Khanikin first he would cut off the retreat of the 13th Corps.

Their Senna detachment was hurrying to Kermanshah and the whole Turkish force was advancing against time to reach Khanikin.

General Maude, therefore, had three tasks before him now. One was to get to Khanikin before the enemy; the second was to harass the retreating 18th Corps in front of him; and the third was to prevent the Turks from cutting important dams on the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and to drive them north beyond the railhead at Samarra.

This involved continuous marching and fighting without a break for two nights and a day. General Maude in addition, had to secure his left flank by seizing Falluja, the nearest point on the River Euphrates to Baghdad, and so to cut the enemy's communications between the upper and lower river. He, therefore, divided his forces into four columns. Troops advanced up each bank of the River Tigris, a third struck westward towards Falluja, and a fourth followed the Persian road up the Diyala valley.

The fall of Baghdad was an event of the first magnitude in the war, as it restored British prestige in the East, which Kut and Gallipoli had shaken.

At the beginning of this campaign we had started with improvisations, and we had failed; we had now a methodical organization, and we succeeded. General Maude, by careful preparation, had constructed an excellent strategical scheme because it was commensurate with the ability to maintain the army. Earlier in this campaign, directly administration

failed to keep pace with the ambitious strategical conceptions, there was disaster, because movement could not be maintained, and troops could not be concentrated at the decisive places. Under General Maude the whole work was marked by much forethought, meticulous care, and great resourcefulness.

Of the troops General Maude wrote: "Each difficulty encountered seemed but to steel their determination to overcome it.

"It may be truly said that not only have the traditions of these ancient British and Indian Regiments been in safe keeping in the hands of their present representatives, but that these have added fresh lustre to the records on their time-honoured scrolls.

"Where fighting was almost daily in progress it is difficult to particularize, but the fierce encounters west of the River Hai, the passages of the River Tigris and River Diyala, and the final storming of the Sannaiyat position may perhaps be mentioned as typical of all that is best in the British and Indian soldier." It must be noted that in the final operation leading to the capture of Baghdad Maude had gained a complete victory. By throwing a bridge at Bawi across the Tigris below the junction of the River Diyala with the main river, and by attacking the line of the River Diyala while at the same time moving up the farther bank of the Tigris, he pinned down the Turks who were pressing forward to attack our 7th Division, who were on the western bank. He accepted a risk involved in forcing a passage across the tributary stream, when the enemy holding it would virtually be turned by the troops, who were advancing up the right bank of the Tigris.

He did not, however, wish to manoeuvre the Turks out of a position, and allow them to withdraw in their own time in a northerly direction. He meant to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy, and in this he was successful.

The Turks cut the dam above Baghdad as soon as we entered the city. The river waters burst into the Aqarquf Lake, which overflowed and swamped all ground up to the bund protecting the western suburbs. The bund held firm, and as the Tigris was very low there was no serious hindrance to our operations in a northerly or westerly direction.

On this day the 13th Division encamped at Es Salekh, north of Baghdad on the left bank of the River Tigris, leaving

two battalions to help the 13th Hussars to keep order in Baghdad.

The 14th Division was just north of the River Diyala bridge. The 3rd Division (less the 7th Brigade) was at Bawi. The 7th Brigade was in the south-west sector of Baghdad.

12th March. Khalil Pasha withdrew his headquarters to Samarra. The 18th Corps withdrew up both banks of the River Tigris, and also sent a detachment up the Diyala to Baquba to link up with the Russians. The 13th Corps was between Kermanshah and Qasrishirin. Its strength now was 800 sabres, 50 guns, and 7,500 rifles. Their rearward troops were in touch with the Russians on the Pai Tak Pass.

There was still great hope that the Russians would co-operate although the revolution in Russia had started on the 10th March. The Russians at this time were in occupation of Erzeroum, Erzinjan, and Trebizond.

They had reinforcements coming to Baratoff at Kermanshah, but the country between Persia and the Caucasus was barren and mountainous.

It was considered at this time that the best point of junction between the two forces would be at Mosul, 240 miles north of Baghdad. This would entail heavy demands on our resources and material, the difficulties of supply would be considerable as the Tigris above Samarra was unnavigable.

For the present, however, the policy was to secure the Baghdad vilayet, and to clear the Turkish 18th Corps from it, to prevent the flooding of Baghdad, and to defeat the Turkish 13th Corps in co-operation with the Russians.

13th March. The 1st Corps (less the 3rd Division) was ordered to pursue the Turks up the west bank of the River Tigris. The first objective was the enemy holding a position $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Mushaidiya station. Their strength was reported to be 7,000 rifles and 24 guns. Our force left Baghdad at 23.30 hours, but the enemy was not engaged until 15.20 hours on the following day, owing to direction having been lost during the night, and owing to the difficulty in consequence of mirage in locating the enemy's exact position and where his flanks rested.

14th March. The 21st Brigade west of the railway attacked the enemy in their located position covering Mushaidiya station, the 28th Brigade on their right advanced east of the railway followed by the 19th Brigade in Divisional reserve.

Our determined frontal attacks were continued until at 23.30 hours the 21st Brigade gained possession of the railway station.

Pursuit was not possible owing to the exhaustion of the troops.

A small party of infantry of the 14th Division in Ford vans was sent up the right bank of the Diyala towards Baquba.

15th March. The infantry party at Baquba were unable to proceed beyond this place, where they found that the bridge had been removed.

16th March. The 8th Brigade group was dispatched to seize the Baquba crossing via Khan Beni Saad.

17th March. Baquba was reached by the 8th Brigade group, and the river was crossed 3 miles below the town.

18th March. Baquba was occupied soon after daybreak. General Keary's column was now concentrated at this place. It consisted of the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades, one Pioneer battalion, less one company, the 7th Cavalry Brigade less one regiment, two field brigades, R.A., less one battery, one howitzer battery, field ambulances, a wireless set, and four armoured cars.

The Russians were close to Karind on this day.

General Keary's instructions now were to push on to Shabraban, without committing his force across river obstacles before ensuring the possibilities of withdrawal in case of flood, and to impede the withdrawal of the 13th Corps in order to assist Baratoff.

His supplies were to be brought up by 150 Ford vans.

The 7th Infantry Brigade with attached troops started for Falluja via Nukhta in order to save the dam at Bustan.

19th March. The 7th Infantry Brigade group reached Falluja. The Turks in the vicinity were estimated at 2,000 rifles and 4 guns. Our troops arrived too late to cut off the garrisons of the middle valley on their northward retreat. The Turks' rearguards, however, were harassed, and were driven 25 miles upstream to their prepared position at Ramadi Bunds now constructed along the Nukhta road.

20th March. General Keary sent forward a portion of his force towards Shahraban on receipt of the information that 2,000 Turks were advancing from Qasrishirin. His cavalry reached Abu Jisra.

21st March. General Keary's force came in touch with

the enemy in front of Shahraban. The Turks destroyed the bridge over the Mahrut Canal.

General Keary's force was held up at this obstruction.

23rd March. The enemy was shelled out of Shahraban. General Keary's column pursued the Turks up to the Jabal Hamrin, where the 8th Infantry Brigade was held up by the enemy holding a strong position behind two big canals.

The 8th Brigade was only able to cross the Nahrunia Canal after dark, and was then checked at the Balad Ruz. The Turks' main position, held by 4,500 rifles and 20 guns was in the Jabal Hamrin, which dominated all the plain to the south of it, being 800 ft. above it.

24th March. General Keary bridged the canals in his front. His plan was to contain the Turks in front with two battalions, then with the largest possible striking force attack the enemy's left flank from the south at dawn after crossing the Balad Ruz.

25th March. The Turks were not surprised by our attack, as they had seen our operations for bridging the Nahrunia and Balad Ruz Canals.

Nor did we accurately locate the Turks' southern flank. The result was that our turning movement became a frontal attack against the Turkish left where the Turks were in force. Our 9th Brigade, making the attack, had some difficulty in withdrawing covered by the 8th Reserve Brigade, which was fully engaged in endeavouring to stop counter-attacks round our right flank, and in checking the enemy's advance. We lost 1,200 men in this engagement.

On this day the Cavalry Division gained touch with the Turkish 13th Corps near Deli Abbas.

The 40th Brigade held a position at Sundiya—Daltawa in advance of the remainder of the 13th Division. On their front was the 18th Corps.

26th March. The Turks' 6th Division withdrew from Keary's column followed by the 8th Brigade.

29th March. The Turks delayed the Russians at the Pai Tak Pass with two battalions, while the remainder of their 2nd Division withdrew through Qizil Robat. Their 6th Division held the Jabal Hamrin position to delay Keary's column until their 2nd Division was clear, and then the 6th Division in turn withdrew.

Khalil, in order to assist the 13th Corps, ordered his 18th Corps to advance across the Tigris to the Adhaim to join up

with the 13th Corps on the line Es Sued—Sindiya (15 miles north-west of Baquba).

Our 13th Division now was on the line Daltawa—Sindiya (35 miles north of Baghdad where the Rivers Tigris and Diyala are only 9 miles apart). The 13th Division attacked the part of the 18th Corps north of them near Marah, and drove them back across the Adhaim. This defeated party of Turks was estimated at 5,000 rifles and 24 guns.

Our casualties were 450, and we captured 180 prisoners.

30th March. The Turks of the 13th Corps, estimated at 4,500 rifles and 10 guns retired from in front of the Cavalry Division, who with the help of a battalion of the Norfolks had contained this party of the Turks in the vicinity of Baquba since the 24th March.

31st March. It now became apparent that no further help on any large scale could be expected from the Russians. As a result their 13th and 18th Corps could unite on our front. General Maude, therefore, ordered Keary's column back to Baghdad.

1st April. The 8th Brigade advanced after a reconnaissance in order to join up with the Russians, and occupied Qizil Robat.

2nd April. A sotnia of Cossacks joined us at Qizil Robat. The withdrawal of General Keary's column to Baghdad began.

5th April. General Maude's plan now was to carry out a combined action on both sides of the Tigris with two columns at Balad and at the mouth of the Adhaim, while the Cavalry Division prevented the Turks debouching from the hills on the right bank of the Diyala. The column on the right bank, under General Fane, was south of Balad near Sunaicha; it consisted of the 7th Division (6,000 rifles) a squadron of cavalry, 44 guns, a bridging train, and a flight of the R.F.C.

The column on the left bank was near Sindiya. It was commanded by General Marshall, and consisted of the 13th Division, a cavalry brigade, a bridging train, and a flight R.F.C. The Turks at this time had, on the right bank of the Tigris north of Balad, 6,200 rifles and 16 guns, on the left bank of the River Adhaim 4,300 rifles and 28 guns, with a reserve at Samarra of 2,200 rifles and 10 guns.

7th April. General Maude's plan for a combined advance up both banks of the Tigris was upset by the movement of

the 13th Turkish Corps from the Kifri road along the Khalis Canal against the flank of our right column.

General Marshall on reaching Kuwar Reach accordingly had to turn east in order to deal with the 13th Corps, and in consequence could not keep up with the column under General Fane, on the right bank of the Tigris, advancing on Balad, having reached Sunaicha on this date.

8th April. General Fane at 17.00 hours sent forward the 28th Brigade supported by artillery to attack the Turkish position at Balad station. This attack was carried out by holding the enemy in front and at the same time enveloping their right flank. This operation was completely successful. The Turks withdrew 1,500 yds. Under cover of darkness they withdrew farther north. The 19th Brigade passed through the 28th Brigade and captured Harbeh on the railway 26 miles from Baghdad.

10th April. The Cavalry Division was in touch with the Turks about Arab-bu-Abin. The Cavalry Division was now put under General Marshall's orders.

General Marshall left his 38th Brigade to watch the Adhaim, and with the remainder of his column marched in an easterly direction towards the Turks who had been located by our cavalry.

11th April. At dawn there was an encounter battle, as both sides had been marching during the night. The battle began in a mirage, which while it lasted made air reconnaissance impossible. However, our column was able to locate and strike the enemy's right flank, causing them to withdraw back to their trenches at Arab-bu-Abin, leaving behind 700 wounded prisoners.

13th April. General Marshall's column was again in touch with the Turks, but was unable to dislodge them from their entrenched position.

15th April. The Turks withdrew to the Jabal Hamrin foothills, where they were so strongly entrenched that General Marshall decided to leave a column under General Keary to watch them, and to hold an entrenched line about Arab-bu-Abin. This column consisted of the Cavalry Division (less two regiments and a Horse Artillery battery), and the 13th Division (less the 38th Brigade and some artillery and a company, R.E.).

General Marshall, with the remainder of his force, returned to the Adhaim.

17th April. General Marshall's Force was concentrated at Dugama (8 miles south-east of the mouth of the River Adhaim).

During the night 17/18th April this force crossed the River Adhaim.

This operation was completely successful. The infantry crossed the river near its mouth, and at dawn gained a position on the right bank with very few casualties. Our cavalry diverted the enemy from the main crossing by making a demonstration upstream against their left flank. The enemy's attention having been drawn in this direction, the actual crossing took place lower down, close to the mouth of the River Adhaim, and the cliffs opposite were then seized. While the enemy's attention was concentrated on his left flank owing to the cavalry action and the infantry demonstration at the old ford, during the night two infantry battalions in pontoons passed across the river near its mouth. At 04.50 hours these two battalions rushed the Turks on the cliffs north of Kabaj village. As soon as they had gained the cliffs a bridge was constructed across the river, and reinforcements crossed. The plan now was to envelop the enemy's right flank, and to work round between the River Tigris and this flank. The cavalry were to co-operate after crossing at the bridge by moving round the left flank of the infantry in order to cut the Turks off from the River Tigris. By 12.30 hours three battalions with the cavalry had carried out this plan with complete success, and had taken 1,300 prisoners. Our losses were 73.

The cavalry continued the pursuit till 02.00 hours. This river crossing was an excellent example of an operation of this nature, as there was surprise and full value was made of the mobility of cavalry. There was plenty of time for such reconnaissance and for necessary preparations. The enemy were 2,000 strong on the right bank of the river. The river, though only 15 yds. wide and 3 ft. deep, had a treacherous bottom, which caused crossings to be made only at the fords. The bed of the river was 2,000 yds. wide and 50 ft. below the general level of the plain. The banks of the river bed were in most places very steep. In spite of these physical difficulties General Marshall's column achieved an easy success by 12.30 hours on the 18th April, when the whole Turkish position was captured.

18th April. The enemy was pursued toward Samarra.

General Cobbe assumed command of the troops on the right bank of the River Tigris.

19th April. The Tigris was bridged at Sinijah, where a river-head was now established.

20th April. The cavalry brigade under General Cassels now came under the command of General Cobbe on the right bank of the Tigris. The Turks were now estimated at 200 sabres, 31 guns, and 6,700 rifles, in a position near Istabulat, facing south-west, on a front of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with their left resting on the River Tigris. Their right, crossing the Baghdad—Samarra railway and the Dujail Canal, was bent back parallel to the railway line to the west of the Istabulat ruins. The Dujail Canal, 20 ft. deep, 25 ft. broad, with steep banks 40 ft. high, diagonally situated to our advance, was a considerable obstacle.

The key to the Turkish position was two redoubts north of the canal, and also a group of mounds in rear of their left centre affording excellent machine-gun positions.

On this day the enemy's covering troops had been driven back, and an advanced line had been established 2,200 yds. from his main position.

21st April. At 05.00 hours, under a creeping barrage, the 21st Brigade attacked the enemy's position north of the Dujail Canal.

Steady progress was made, and the enemy's northern redoubt was captured.

Their other redoubt north of the Dujail Canal was the scene of very fierce fighting, in which it changed hands several times before it was finally secured by the Black Watch.

South of the Dujail Canal the attack by the 19th Brigade commenced at 06.30 hours on a three-battalion front across 2,000 yds. of open ground. We gained a footing in the enemy's trenches on a front of 700 yds. after an hour's fighting. The railway station south of the canal was also in our hands by this time. Further progress it was then found would lead to very heavy casualties without reorganization and careful preparation after dark. Our position was maintained throughout the day in spite of heavy Turkish counter-attacks. The action was fought on a day of intense heat. At a cost of 73 casualties we took over 680 prisoners.

22nd April. Patrols at 04.30 hours reported that the enemy were evacuating their position. We moved forward and

entered it, while the cavalry and armoured cars pursued the Turks toward Samarra, followed by the 28th Brigade, who gained contact with the enemy's partially entrenched position near Istabulat Police Post $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of their position on the previous day. Owing to the great heat the attack on this position had to be postponed till the evening. The enemy's position was bombarded at 16.00 hours for twenty minutes, and then was attacked by the 28th Brigade on a single battalion front, supported by two other battalions. Our plan was to envelop the enemy's left flank with infantry, while the cavalry and armoured cars turned their other flank covered by the enfilade fire of artillery from the left bank of the River Tigris. The first assault was successful, and the leading battalion (the Leicesters) were able to overrun the enemy's front defences, and to push on for 1,500 yds., and to capture 7 guns. At this point the Turks made a counter-attack on the flank of the 28th Brigade. The Leicesters, in their advanced position, had great difficulty in withdrawing.

They were extricated by the counter-attacks of the Brigade reserves, but not before they had lost heavily, and also the 7 guns which they had captured earlier. The cavalry on the left flank of the infantry, moved right round the enemy's right flank, and were able to reconnoitre Samarra station, and the troops in the enemy's rear. During the day the 32nd Lancers made a spirited effort to break through the enemy's line of trenches by means of mounted action at a time when the Turks' counter-attack against the flank of the 28th Brigade was progressing. This regiment charged over the first line of enemy trenches, and galloped on to the next line before covering fire could be arranged or adequate mopping-up of the front line had been carried out. The result was that the Turks in the front line, who had been disorganized and demoralized, rallied and poured heavy fire into them from the rear, while they were met with heavy frontal fire from the supporting trenches. The regiment lost heavily before they were able to withdraw. Had time been allowed for the arrangement of covering fire from the armoured cars, this action might have been a complete success. As it was, it materially distracted the Turks from the counter-attack they were making, and was of great value, therefore, in the day's fighting.

The Turks continued their resistance during the night,

but before daylight they evacuated their position and retired north. In the fighting of the past two days we captured, in addition to prisoners, 15 guns, 2 machine guns, 16 engines and 240 trucks, and large quantities of rifles. Our casualties had been 2,000.

23rd April. By 10.00 hours we reached Samarra. Khalil Pasha now made a final counter-stroke. He brought the 13th Turkish Corps once more from the Jabal Hamrin down the Adhaim against General Marshall's forces on the left bank of the River Tigris. General Marshall, therefore, had to turn north to deal with them. Ali Ihsan's troops had been located in two echelons 17 miles apart. The leading echelon at 17.00 hours was estimated to be 2,000 rifles and 9 guns, in the vicinity of Dahuba.

General Marshall, therefore, issued orders for a night march in order to attack at dawn the forward position of the 13th Corps before the whole Corps was able to concentrate.

24th April. The infantry made a frontal attack soon after daybreak against the enemy in position at Dahuba, while the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved wide to the north in order to intercept any supporting troops moving down to support their forward echelon.

Our attacks developed rapidly, and as soon as the Turks realized the weight of our attack on their whole front they gave way, crossed the river, and withdrew rapidly up to their supporting echelon, shelled as they went by the horse artillery and machine guns of the cavalry.

25th April. The R.F.C. reported that the Turks were retiring up both banks of the river. General Marshall's columns pursued the retreating enemy.

27th April. General Marshall's column reached Satha Ruins in contact with the Turkish rearguards, covering the retirement of their 13th Corps to the Jabal Hamrin foothills.

30th April. Battle of Band-i-Adhaim. General Marshall's plan was to attack vigorously against the enemy's weaker flank up the left bank of the River Adhaim, and then to turn north and west and drive him away from water, and to cut off his line of retreat. Our attack started at 05.00 hours. The 40th Brigade, covered by all available artillery, advanced over 1,000 yds. of open plain, and carried the enemy's forward trenches close to the village. Three hours later all objectives, including the village of Adhaim, had been captured. The

first objective being overrun, the two leading battalions pushed on for nearly 2 miles and captured 300 prisoners and two batteries, and a section of machine guns. They were out of touch with the remainder of the 40th Brigade, and with the 35th Brigade advancing on the right bank of the river towards the Boot. At the Boot the enemy were able to hold up the 35th Brigade by their accurate and heavy machine gun fire. The Turkish commander, who was with his Reserve 5,000 yds. from the village, noted the isolation of the leading battalions of the 40th Brigade, and at once launched a counter-attack across the front of the 38th Brigade, unseen by our troops owing to the heavy dust storm, against their right flank. The Turks were helped by the dust storm, which prevented any artillery support, and enabled them to recapture the bulk of the prisoners and the guns, and to regain Adhaim.

When the dust storm cleared the enemy tried to debouch from the village, but they were checked by our artillery and rifle fire, and by 11.00 hours were again driven out of the village. The Turks were later helped by a continuance of the dust storm, and were able to strengthen their left flank, and to secure their line of retreat to the north-east.

At 16.00 hours when the storm died down again, the enemy's trenches and artillery north-east of the village were shelled effectively. Our troops bivouacked on the ground won, and kept touch with the enemy, who withdrew through the Jabal Hamrin during the night. The Turks were then on divergent lines, the 18th Corps, after four defeats, being towards Tekrit and the 13th Corps being in the Jabal Hamrin after suffering heavily on the two occasions on which they had taken the offensive.

After the last four and a half months' fighting, the Turkish 6th Army had no longer any value; the objectives which we had set out to reach had been secured, namely, the control of the Euphrates as far as Falluja, the road to Persia had been opened, Kut, Baghdad, and Samarra had been captured in a total advance on the Tigris of 200 miles. Our battle casualties during these operations had been approximately 18,000, but these must be considered to be slight when compared with those incurred during the four months of unsuccessful endeavour to relieve Kut. We now controlled the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Diyala. During April only, General Maude had defeated the 13th Turkish Corps

three times, and the 18th Corps five times driving it back over 60 miles, and capturing 3,000 prisoners and 16 guns.

It was now necessary, owing to the great heat, to redistribute the troops, and to give them as much rest as possible, in view of the work still to be done. It was necessary to consolidate the positions gained, and to strengthen them. Our forward position on the River Tigris was 700 miles from the sea by the winding river. On our right flank was the uncertain factor of Persia.

The Russians were evacuating the line of the Diyala River, and withdrawing beyond Karind and Kermanshah. This necessitated a forward move on our part to occupy Beled Ruz on the 23rd June. In our front was a hostile entrenched camp drawing reinforcements from Mosul by the Tigris valley, on the left flank was the Euphrates valley with its caravan route to Aleppo. Here at Falluja the Turks were 25 miles upstream at Ramadi.

This town is on the right bank of the river. The Turkish Commander, Ahmed Bey, occupied an entrenched position covering it on the east and south-east with 1,000 Turkish rifles and 2,000 Arab rifles. Our advance on Samarra on the Tigris had brought our centre so much in advance of our flanks that it was decided to bring up our left wing and early in July to occupy Sinn el Libban, 12 miles upstream of Falluja. Once Sinn el Libban was occupied it would enable us to command the ground in the vicinity on the right bank of the River Euphrates, and also to dominate the left bank of this river at its junction with the Saklawija Canal. Once at this place we should be within striking distance of Ramadi, so that it seemed to be a favourable opportunity for attacking the enemy in their located position.

8th July. Sinn el Libban was occupied.

10th July. The column for the attack on the enemy's position at Ramadi assembled at Sinn el Libban. The approaches to Ramadi were carefully reconnoitred.

11th July. After a night march by 04.00 hours the column was in touch with the Turks east of Ramadi, and by 08.15 hours had driven in his advanced posts.

But the main attack could not be delivered. A dust storm sprang up, and observation became impossible. Our communications were interrupted to such an extent that a co-ordinated attack was impossible. The orders for the attack were accordingly abandoned, and during the night

11/12 July troops were withdrawn to the river at Mushaid, where there was a little shelter.

12th July. An abnormal heat wave started. As the Turks showed no signs of evacuating their position, preparations were made to retire back to Sinn el Libban.

14th July. A methodical withdrawal to Falluja was carried out. About 1,500 Arab tribesmen who followed us up were severely dealt with by our artillery and light armoured motor batteries.

August. During this month there was another small operation. Our line had been drawn in on the River Diyala, and the retreat of the Russians had emboldened the enemy. The R.F.C. reported that the Turks were entrenching a position south-west of Shahraban. It was, therefore, decided to occupy Shahraban.

Converging columns were sent from Beled Ruz and from Baquba on the night 18/19th August.

19th August. Misdad was captured.

20th August. Shahraban was occupied. The Turks retired into the Jabal Hamrin. A new line was consolidated without interference by the enemy.

September. The weather was cooler now, and plans were matured for the attack on Ramadi. Our occupation of this town would complete our blockade of the enemy from the south, as it would cut off the desert route from Kerbela by which supplies from the Lower Euphrates were getting through to the Turks. Also, the town was a convenient centre for the control of the desert tribes, and an important point to hold in connection with the Euphrates irrigation scheme.

Our plan of operations was to turn the southern flank of the enemy holding Mushaid Ridge, attack Ramadi from the south with the bulk of the column after securing a crossing over the Euphrates Valley Canal.

The cavalry were to operate west of the Aziziya Canal, and to get astride the enemy's communications with Hit by blocking the Aleppo Road. It was hoped to mystify and mislead the enemy and induce a belief that the main attack was to come from the west on the Euphrates. Therefore, the river was bridged at Madhij, 8 miles from the Turkish outposts, and a road was made up the left bank of the Euphrates.

27th September. At 18.00 hours on this day two columns

left Madhij. The 12th Brigade was on the right and the 42nd Brigade was on the left.

These columns advanced for 5 miles, and subsequently went on another 2 miles in a westerly direction during the night to a position from which Mushaid ridge could be attacked at dawn, while an infantry detachment marched round the northern side to Lake Habbaniya to occupy important tactical features on and behind the southern flank of the Mushaid position, as well as to hold a dam on the Euphrates Valley Canal.

28th September. The dawn attack caused the enemy to withdraw from the Mushaid Ridge. The Turks then shelled it heavily in the belief that the British still occupied it. Instead, our columns were moving south of it, and at 07.00 hours crossed the dam while the cavalry covered by the Mushaid Ridge, moved west across the Aziziya canal to a position astride the Aleppo road, in order to cut off the enemy's retreat in a northerly direction. The cavalry left the battle area at 07.00 hours, and by 16.00 hours were astride the Aleppo road on a regular line of hills at right angles with the river.

At night the cavalry occupied strong points on a front of 3 miles along their position on the hills.

As soon as the two columns were in position, an attack was started against the Turks' southern front, with the 12th Brigade on the right and the 42nd Brigade on the left.

The Turks held a low pebbly ridge 17 ft. above the plain. Finally, after stiff fighting, our left column gained this ridge and consolidated their position there. The right column (12th Brigade) then passed in rear of the 42nd Brigade, and becoming the left wing of the force now gained a footing on the Aziziya ridge on the left of the 12th Brigade, south-west of the town. The Turks had not anticipated a wide turning movement. They reckoned that the waterless nature of the country was a sufficient protection against an advance on an extended front. It was owing to this miscalculation that we were able to envelop them before they realized the new situation. Our system of water supply by Ford vans gave us unexpected mobility. Twelve thousand gallons were conveyed by motor convoy from the Euphrates to our troops; the vans travelled 75 miles between the river and the front in a day.

Thus the enemy were hemmed in on three sides by the two

infantry columns, and by the cavalry against the River Euphrates. Over the river the Turks had no bridge. Their only chance of escape lay in a counter-attack.

29th September. At 03.00 hours Ahmed Bey made his effort to escape. He tried to break through the cavalry screen so that he could retreat up the Aleppo road. His main attack was against the 11th Hussars.

The fight lasted till dawn, but owing mainly to accurate Horse Artillery and Hotchkiss gun fire they never got within 50 yds. of the cavalry trenches. At 06.15 hours the infantry attacked from the south and south-east, and our 42nd Brigade captured successive positions. The 39th Garhwalis at 07.30 hours seized the bridge over the Euphrates 1 mile east of Ramadi, where the Aleppo road crosses the Aziziya Canal, and they captured 3 guns and some prisoners. About the same time the 90th Punjabis entered Ramadi and captured Ahmed Bey. By 11.00 hours the whole of the Turkish force, consisting of 3,454 men, 13 guns, and 12 machine guns, surrendered.

On this day the troops on our right wing on the River Diyala were engaged.

Here we wished to dislodge the enemy from his strategically important position commanding the centre of the Diyala canals. Our plan was to make a converging movement and to surround the Turks, and to occupy his position in the Jabal Hamrin astride the river. The 13th and 14th Divisions and a Cavalry Brigade were engaged in these operations. Early on this day the cavalry occupied Mandali, 55 miles east of Baquba driving the Turkish garrison eastwards into the hills. Mandali was strategically important, as there was a mountain path leading from it to Harunabad on the Persian trunk road, and it was, therefore, a possible base for a flank attack. We captured 300 baggage camels.

October. During this month General Maude continued to improve his position on his eastern flank.

18th October. The 40th Brigade occupied Deli Abbas.

19th October. The 38th Brigade was in Mansuriya in contact with an enemy force on the right bank of the River Diyala.

The 36th and 37th Brigades worked along the Jabal Hamrin range on the enemy's left flank.

The Turks crossed the River Diyala during the night, and

retreated towards Kifri. Our right flank was now clear for a fresh advance up the River Tigris. The Turkish forces on this occasion evaded capture, but General Maude's object was accomplished, and at very slight cost, also a position astride the Diyala gorge was gained. The main canals were rapidly bridged. Seventy-five bridges of various sizes were built, and in the Jabal Hamrin a complete system of roads was made. The Turkish 18th Corps at this time was entrenched at Tekrit (100 miles north of Baghdad).

23rd October. Parts of the 18th Corps moved down both banks of the River Tigris towards Samarra. They fell back on the approach of British troops with a loss of 2,000 casualties.

24th October. The 7th Division captured Huweslat (8 miles north of Samarra).

2nd November. The enemy were located and engaged by the 28th Brigade at dawn after a night march, in position on the left bank of the river opposite Dur (20 miles upstream of Samarra). After some opposition the Turks withdrew 20 miles to Tekrit, the main advanced base of the Turkish army in Mesopotamia. Although by this time the infantry, during the last 24 hours, had marched 30 miles, it was decided to push on to Tekrit.

5th November. We were in touch with the enemy at Tekrit. At our first assault the 8th Infantry Brigade was completely successful, and were able to carry the enemy's two forward lines of trenches, and to hold them against the enemy's two counter-attacks, while our cavalry worked round the Turks' right flank. Our artillery from across the river shelled their communications. Later in the day the attacks were resumed. The cavalry, supported by the 19th Infantry Brigade, charged into the enemy's trenches from our left flank, and then were able to harass the enemy's retreat up to a strong position which they had previously prepared a few miles in the rear.

During the night the enemy blew up his dumps of ammunition, set fire to his stores, and retreated to Shoreimiya, with a loss of 3,000 men and much booty. The bulk of our force was then ordered back to Samarra.

6th November. Tekrit was occupied. We were now 100 miles from Mosul, but the river beyond Tekrit was full of rapids, so that water transport was not possible in a further advance.

The next step, therefore, must be to clear the Turks' new advanced bases of Kifri and Kirkuk, traversing the foothills of the Persian border.

Our troops were now in a strong strategical position, as the enemy's advanced bases were not well placed for the launching of counter-attacks. General Maude could now confidently await offensive action from any quarter.

However, though General Maude had been successful, yet we had not gained a decision against Turkey. As Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson said on this subject "We had committed ourselves to expeditions on a large scale, and in remote theatres, which were strategically unsound, and had never been properly thought out. The false direction thus given to our strategy imperilled the chances of ultimate success, and at least was bound to hang round our necks like a millstone for the remainder of the war—as it did." It must be noted that the fighting strength of the 16th Infantry Brigade with which the invasion of Mesopotamia began was approximately 5,200, and by the end of 1914 the total was 16,500; by December, 1915, the number of fighting men had increased to 50,000; by April, 1916, the fighting force had been raised to 122,000, and at the end of 1916 the total at the front was 221,150, with 73,000 animals; at the end of 1917 the strength, including non-combatants, was 420,000. These figures do not include casualties, which up to the fall of Kut were 45,000, and before the end of the war were twice that number.

18th November. General Sir Stanley Maude, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., died.

General Marshall in dispatches writes as follows: "General Maude, whose genius had altered the whole face of affairs in Mesopotamia, was an almost irreparable loss; he had taken over an army whose morale had been severely tried by their failure to effect the relief of Kut, whose health had been sapped by a very trying climate, and consequently he had a very difficult task to restore its fighting efficiency, but in a few months by his hard work and great gifts of organization, clear-sightedness, determination, and, above all, by his intense sympathy with and love of his soldiers, a very different state of affairs came into being."

General Marshall, who succeeded General Maude, now decided to attack the part of the 13th Turkish Corps which was holding the Diyala river above Mansuriya, the passes

over the Jabal Hamrin, and Kara Tepe. Our troops, therefore, had to force the passage of the rivers Diyala and Nahrin, and also to occupy the Sakaltutan and Abu Lenebil passes through the Jabal Hamrin.

The possibilities of operations against the Turks were somewhat restricted. Both on the Euphrates and on the Tigris the Turks had retreated out of rapid striking distance. It was only on the right flank along the road to Mosul that there seemed to be a chance of attacking the enemy.

3rd December. The Diyala river operations were entrusted to General Egerton, while a cavalry force, under General Jones, was ordered to demonstrate up the Adhaim river in order to prevent reinforcements being brought down against our attacking force from Kirkuk.

By this date the Turkish position between Mirjana and the Nahrin river was occupied, and the Turks were driven along the Mosul road through Kifri. As a result of this operation the British remained in possession of the Sakaltutan Pass, from which there was observation over a considerable stretch of country to the north, and which was held with a view to further action.

5th December. Kara Tepe was captured by a combined frontal and flank attack of two brigades closely supported by artillery, who were helped by aeroplane observation.

8th December. Troops were withdrawn from the forward areas, but a bridge-head was established at Qizil Robat. The Sakaltutan and Abu Zenabil passes were held.

9th December. Khanikin was occupied.

This was the last operation of 1917.

At this time eight divisions and a cavalry division were being maintained. Three thousand tons a day could now be delivered at Baghdad. Three hundred steamers and launches with over 800 barges were at work on the Tigris for this purpose. The Tigris was piloted in sections, channels were improved and marked, and the Narrows were lit by electricity for all-night navigation. Basra harbour had been so much improved that twenty ocean vessels could be unloaded there at one time. Swamp land in this area had been reclaimed. Large base workshops, in which several thousand Chinese artificers were employed, were established. The metre gauge line ran from Basra both to Nasariya and the Amara; also from Kut to Baghdad to Quraitu on the Persian frontier. On the west of the Tigris the standard

gauge German line ran from Baghdad both via Samarra to Baiji (a distance of 132 miles) and also to Hilla (56 miles south of Baghdad), and to Dibbhan (48 miles west of Baghdad). A motor road was being constructed to Qasr-i-Shirin, and later it ran across Persia to Kazvin.

GENERAL SUMMARY

1918

In February the Turks became aggressive on the Euphrates front, sending patrols down the river. General Brooking was then ordered to capture Hit. The Turks withdrew 20 miles upstream to Khan Baghdadi. Our attack was made on the 26th March. Throughout that day and night the infantry were fighting while the cavalry were enveloping the enemy's position. They had completed this movement during the evening and had gained the Aleppo road cutting off the enemy's retreat by road and river.

About midnight the Turks tried to break through, but they were completely defeated with a loss to them of 1,000 prisoners.

Next morning the bulk of them surrendered; the cavalry and armoured cars pursued the enemy. There was no serious resistance. On the 28th March the column reached Ana, where a large ammunition reserve was found.

The motor force continued the pursuit covering 140 miles in two days and took 5,200 prisoners. Owing to the defection and withdrawal of the Russians, General Marshall considered that it was necessary to take further action in the Jabal Hamrin. General Egerton's column was mostly cavalry, and was able to press the enemy vigorously. The Turks at Kifri did not await the attack. They retreated on Kirkuk. One of their columns was overtaken by the cavalry and charged.

We took 540 prisoners. On the 28th April the cavalry forced the passage of the Ak Su. On the following day they took Tuz Kurmatli. On the 7th May they entered Kirkuk. The Turks now retired 25 miles beyond the Lesser Zab. Our offensive operations on the Aleppo and Mosul roads enabled us to inflict over 10,000 casualties, including 7,500 prisoners and 30 guns. In the south-west of Persia, in Arabistan, General Marshall sent a small part of his force to maintain order in Ahwaz, Shustar, and Dizful. On the 24th October, when General Allenby was close to Aleppo, General Marshall renewed operations in Mesopotamia. The

Turks were attacked in their position at Fatha, where the Tigris flows through the Jabal Hamrin. The 17th Indian Division and 11th Cavalry Brigade operated west of the River Tigris; the 18th Indian Division operated on the left bank with the 7th Indian Cavalry Brigade.

The 11th Indian Cavalry Brigade forced a crossing over the Lesser Zab in face of opposition, and by a further march of 50 miles enveloped the Turks and reached their lines of communication at Hurwash, where they were joined by our armoured car brigade. The Turks then fell back to their second line at the confluence of the Lesser Zab. On the 25th October the 18th Indian Division crossed the Lesser Zab and drove the enemy from the east bank of the river to the west bank, where the 17th Indian Division were closing on to them. After heavy and continuous fighting, of which the difficulty was increased by the sandy nature of the soil, which delayed transport, the 17th Division forced the Turks to withdraw on the 27th October to their third position on the hills covering Shergat. Throughout that day the Turkish reserves tried to break through the 11th Cavalry Brigade but without success, but the arrival of Turkish reinforcements from Mosul forced the Cavalry Brigade to withdraw its right flank. On the night 27/28th October the 7th Indian Cavalry Brigade joined the 11th Indian Cavalry Brigade, and with the 53rd Indian Brigade moving up the left bank of the Tigris made a march of 33 miles, and was able to support the cavalry in preventing the Turks from breaking through. On the 28th October the 17th Indian Division successfully assaulted the Turkish Shergat Division, and on the following day pushed forward and attacked till nightfall the Turks, who were now hemmed in. Part of the enemy force which tried to escape during the night was cut off by cavalry, and about 1,000 prisoners and much material were captured.

On the morning of the 30th the Turkish Commander surrendered his total force, consisting of the whole of the 14th Division, the bulk of the 2nd Division, and portions of two regiments of the 5th Division, with all their artillery train and administrative services (altogether some 7,000 men, besides the 1,000 already captured). Subsidiary operations were undertaken on the Baghdad-Mosul road. On the 18th October an enemy cavalry detachment was driven out of Tauq, and Kirkuk was captured on the 20th

October. The enemy retreated and was followed up to Altun Kupri by armoured cars. On the 27th October our main column was in touch with the enemy covering the crossing of the Lesser Zab. Mosul was formally surrendered on the 14th November.

The whole Turkish forces in this theatre of war had practically ceased to exist.

1918

February. The Turks, having received reinforcements, began to send patrols down the Euphrates, as far as Uqbah and Nafata. General Marshall consequently ordered General Brooking to capture Hit and its garrison.

19th February. Uqbah was occupied. Reconnaissance was made upstream, and it was found that the Turks were holding a position 2 miles above Hit behind the Broad Wadi, with the bulk of their troops at Salahiya, a further 15 miles upstream.

Arrangements were made to bring up supplies for a forward move, and to reconnoitre towards Salahiya.

8th March. The Turks vacated their forward position at Broad Wadi, and concentrated at Salahiya. They were bombed by the R.F.C. during their retreat.

26th March. The Turks withdrew from their forward positions to Khan Baghdadi, which was attacked at 17.00 hours. The plan that was carried out was for the infantry to make a frontal attack covered by a barrage, while the cavalry and armoured cars went round their right flank. This the cavalry were able to do. They gained a position astride the Aleppo road, where it crosses the Wadi Hauran just as the infantry attack was causing the Turks to retreat. At 23.30 hours the Turks made an effort to escape through the centre of the cavalry positions. They were defeated with a loss of 1,000 prisoners.

27th March. The infantry got into touch with the retreating Turks, who were being checked by the cavalry, and inflicted a heavy defeat on them. A vigorous pursuit was carried on towards Aleppo by the cavalry, R.F.C., and armoured cars. Haditha was captured, and Khan Feheme was reached before dark. At Haditha were found ammunition dumps which there had been no time to explode.

28th March. Ana (80 miles north-west of Hit) was reached. An ammunition dump was found at this place, and it was

blown up. The pursuit was continued by motor for a further 73 miles, when the enemy were completely demoralized. The motor force had covered 140 miles in two days.

Over 5,200 prisoners were taken, including the commander and staff of the 30th Turkish Division.

General Marshall now withdrew his troops, leaving Khan Baghdadi to be reoccupied by the enemy.

General Marshall now decided to open up the main trade route to Kermanshah. Therefore, towards this place small posts were advanced.

Reconnaissances by cavalry, supported by the R.F.C. and armoured cars, were carried out in advance of our forward troops on the Rivers Diyala, Tigris, and Euphrates for the next few weeks.

Now that the Russian troops had withdrawn it was necessary to take action towards the Turks' advanced base at Kifri, in order to prevent the entry of small mobile forces of the enemy into Persia, and at the same time cause as much damage as possible to them. Operations were, therefore, undertaken up the Mosul road.

A mobile column reached Kifri by the middle of April. The Turks were completely surprised, and retired without waiting for our attack. They retreated on Kirkuk, but the cavalry overtook one of their columns, and immediately charged it, taking 540 prisoners.

28th April. Cavalry forced the passage of the Ak Su (it crosses the road to Mosul 20 miles north-west of Kifri).

29th April. Cavalry captured Tuz Kurmatli (20 miles north-west of Kifri, where the Ak Su crosses the road to Mosul).

7th May. Cavalry entered Kirkuk, the Turkish headquarters on this front. The pursuit was now carried on by the cavalry for another 25 miles, and the Turks withdrew rapidly beyond the Lesser Zab. After removing military stores from Kirkuk the cavalry withdrew, leaving a post at Kifri to control the route to Persia. The Turks in this operation had been driven back for over 100 miles across the high plateau of Southern Kurdistan to the Lesser Zab. We inflicted over 10,000 casualties on the Turks, and we captured 30 guns.

This operation on the Mosul road formed the preliminary step in a wide development of military policy in the East. General Marshall wished to open up the main trade route

with Persia via Kermanshah, in order to get supplies to the poor inhabitants, who were reduced to a state of famine by the passage of Turkish armies, and by the drought in the summer of 1917. The inhabitants were dying of hunger in thousands. It would be possible now to provide an outlet for the native manufactures, and to furnish the people with employment in improving the roads. It was possible then to restore order in some of the Persian border districts, and to protect the tribes. In south-west Persia, too, order was being maintained.

Here the primary object was the protection of the oilfields, but our troops also maintained order in Ahwaz, Shushtar, and Dizful. Along nearly the whole western border of Persia we were able now to carry out the work of pacification which would check the menace to our flank in Mesopotamia, caused by the Turkish advance into Persia via Transcaucasia, as since the defection of Russia the Turks had overrun Armenia, had advanced into Northern Persia, and occupied Tabriz, and were carrying out schemes to undermine British security in the East.

General Marshall also turned his attention to the pacification of the Euphrates from Nasiriya to Falluja. He wished that the riverain tribes should be brought under civil and military control. He considered "that the time was ripe to establish a firm control of the line of the Euphrates, and by that means encourage and assist in the development of the rich agricultural lands in that area. To that end I issued orders for troops to be dispatched from Nasiriya and Baghdad to garrison various villages, thus establishing through communication by river between Basra and Falluja, and controlling the development of local resources throughout the lower Euphrates Valley. The extension of military control over this area was also desirable, in order that the shaikhs of important towns like Kerbela, Nejf, Hilla, and Diwaniya might be brought more closely into the sphere of British influence, and that pro-Turk sympathizers might be expelled. Care was taken not to establish troops in either of the religious cities of Kerbela and Nejf, and they were quartered at a distance." (Dispatches.)

On the 21st March our political officer in Nejf was murdered. The town was, therefore, blockaded until all those implicated in the murder were given up. At the same time the Hilla area was developed. A branch railway line was

constructed between Hilla and Falluja, and was ready by the middle of May, 1918.

Our Irrigation Department, employing 14,000 Arabs, controlled the agricultural development and water supply of the Hilla area, at the point where the Euphrates divides into the Hilla and Hindiah branches. By the prevention of floods and the direction of water into useful channels, over 300,000 acres were brought under cultivation. The Arabs of the Euphrates trade with the Arabs of the Syrian Desert. In the Syrian Desert the influence of the Turks was considerably lessened after the occupation of Ramadi, and the decisive defeats they received in the subsequent advance of the British along the Aleppo road. When General Allenby started his offensive operations in September, 1918, with the Arab Army under the King of the Hejaz, and had by his capture of Deraa cut the communications leading north to Damascus, south of Maan and Medina, and west to Haifa and Acre, the desert tribes profited by the double lesson of the pursuit of the Turks up the Aleppo road, and the pacification of the lower Euphrates region. Thus when the Turks required all their energies to meet General Allenby's attack, they found a hostile and mobile force on their flank along the Euphrates and on the Syrian border.

By 25th October, 1918, General Allenby's 5th Cavalry Division, and the armoured cars reached Aleppo, where they were joined by an Arab detachment. On the following day the town was cleared. We were now astride the enemy's communications between Constantinople and Baghdad. Over 75,000 prisoners had been captured during General Allenby's advance since the 18th September. The three Turkish armies in Syria had ceased to exist, and the Turkish Empire was crumbling under the pressure exerted upon it. This was then the opportunity for General Marshall to continue his operations in Mesopotamia. He sent one column up the Tigris, and another along the Kifri—Kirkuk—Altun Kupri road. The Tigris column forced the Turks steadily back, our cavalry cut off their retreat by means of an enveloping movement, and on the 30th October forced 7,000 of them under Ismail Hakki to surrender. The column on the Mosul road occupied Kirkuk on the 25th October, and advanced to Altun Kupri. By the 3rd November Mosul was reached and entered without opposition. Turkey now surrendered to the Allies.

The details of these final operations in 1918 are as follows—

17th October. General Marshall received orders to take the offensive against the enemy opposed to him, namely, the 2nd, 5th, and 14th Divisions and the 6th Turkish Army in the vicinity of Mosul. They held a strongly entrenched position on the Tigris at the Fatha Gorge, 35 miles from our railhead at Tekrit, with 9,000 rifles and 59 guns. This position was between the Jabal Makhul and Khanuka on their right flank, and the Jabal Hamrin on their left flank. They had constructed a bridge across the Tigris at El Humr to enable them to have freedom of movement between their two flanks. This position was extremely formidable, especially as owing to lack of water in the desert and lack of transport to maintain troops there it was not possible to operate away from the direct line of advance against positions which had been carefully chosen and prepared skilfully for the last eighteen months.

General Cobbe, commanding the 1st Corps, the 17th and 18th Divisions, and also the 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades, conducted the Tigris operations.

Another column was detailed from the 3rd Corps to protect the right flank of the Tigris column, and to prevent the Turks from moving down the Lesser Zab.

Our plan was first to clear the enemy from the left bank of the River Tigris, and then to facilitate the task of the troops on the right bank of the river, as it would then be possible to enfilade their positions. The mounted troops were to cut the line of retreat on Mosul on the left bank, while the armoured cars operated on the other bank round the enemy's flank.

18th October. Reserves of ammunition and supplies had now been stored 20 miles north of Tekrit, and every effort had been made to induce the enemy to think that our first and main attack would be against their right flank. Preparations were also made in the Jabal Hamrin for our advance. Two crossing-places over these mountains were arranged, and the water supply had been improved at these places.

General Cobbe's flank detachment moved from Tuz Kermatli (20 miles north-west of Kifri) 20 miles up the Mosul road to Tauq.

23rd October. The 1st Corps was in touch with the enemy on both sides of the Tigris. The flank detachment reached a position 12 miles south-east of Kirkuk.

One of our columns moved along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade under General Norton moved farther north round the Turks' left flank.

These movements, threatening the enemy's line of retreat, caused the Turks to vacate their strong position at Fatha during the night.

24th October. General Cassel's 11th Cavalry Brigade crossed the Lesser Zab 20 miles above its junction with the River Tigris by 15.00 hours in spite of the Turkish opposition.

This movement threatened the Turks' right flank, and caused them to retire. The 17th and 18th Divisions followed up the retreating Turks frontally, while the R.F.C. harassed their columns withdrawing up the Tigris.

25th October. General Norton's Cavalry Brigade and the 53rd Infantry Brigade crossed the Lesser Zab near its junction with the Tigris, while General Cassel's Cavalry Brigade advanced down the right bank.

Our right flank guard occupied Kirkuk.

The difficulties of the country were considerable for the advance of the 17th Division on the right bank of the River Tigris, as the paths over the Jabal Makhul and Jabal Khanuka were in places precipitous. The heat also was extreme. Owing to the difficulty of getting the artillery forward on the right bank, the artillery on the left bank co-operated in the attack made by the 17th Division against the Turks holding a position covering Humr.

Owing to this artillery co-operation and to gallant frontal attacks by the infantry, a footing was obtained in the Turks' advanced positions.

26th October. The frontal attacks were continued against the Turks' positions, while the 11th Cavalry Brigade moved round the enemy's position, forded the river Tigris behind the enemy's defence, and seized the Huwaish gorge astride the road to Mosul.

27th October. The Armoured Car Force cut the enemy's telegraph line to Mosul, and thus isolated the Turks engaged with our 17th Division from the 6th Turkish Army Headquarters.

The 11th Cavalry Brigade and the armoured cars from their position at Huwaish attacked the Turkish reserves, while the 53rd Brigade marched from the Lesser Zab to Huwaish to hold the position blocking the Turks' retreat.

The 17th Division was able to advance slowly, and to maintain pressure against the retreating Turks.

28th October. By 11.00 hours the 17th Division was in touch with the Turkish rearguard, and three hours later had forced it to continue its withdrawal.

Pursuit was not possible owing to the heat, the lack of water, and the fatigue of the troops. The Turks were, therefore, able to withdraw to a position 6 miles south of Huwaish.

The 11th Cavalry Brigade held their position astride the Mosul road in spite of repeated attacks by the enemy to break through from the south.

The 11th Cavalry Brigade were reinforced, and their flank on the right bank of the River Tigris was held by the 7th Cavalry Brigade and 53rd Infantry Brigade.

29th October. The 17th Division were, by 11.00 hours, again up with the Turkish rearguards, and drove them back on to their main body, holding a position north of Shergat. A few hours later this main position was assaulted frontally. The Turks replied with a counter-attack, which in turn was met with and dispersed by an immediate counter-attack.

Throughout the night the fighting continued. During the afternoon Turkish reinforcements from Mosul advanced to a position threatening the right flank of the 11th Cavalry Brigade. These reinforcements were attacked by the 7th Cavalry Brigade, and were turned out of the position which they had occupied and were driven in a northerly direction. The cavalry then blocked the enemy's lines of retreat, and were able to prevent the Turks from breaking through to the north. The position was as follows according to General Marshall's Dispatches: "Gripped as in a vice, with his men packed in ravines, which were raked by our guns from across the Tigris, Ismail Hakki, the Turkish Commander, found himself in a hopeless position. All attempts to break through had failed, communication with the Turkish Commander-in-Chief at Mosul had been rendered impossible, and no relief was in sight. At dawn on 30th October, just as our troops were about to renew the attack, white flags appeared all along the Turkish lines, and later on Ismail Hakki surrendered in person. A close was thus brought to the last battle to be fought in this war by a Turkish Army. Immediately after the surrender the 7th Cavalry Brigade and light armoured motors cars were ordered to push rapidly along the Mosul road and round up any Turkish troops in the vicinity

of Kaiyara. Whilst the fighting as described had been in progress Lewin's column had fulfilled its rôle admirably, and had throughout contained and out-manoœuvred a superior Turkish force, eventually driving it across the Lesser Zab at Altun Kupri (where the Turks blew up the bridge) in the direction of Erbil. Early on 31st October General Lewin occupied Altun Kupri. The total captures during the operations amounted to 11,322 prisoners (including 643 officers), 51 guns, 130 machine guns, over 2,000 animals, 3 paddle steamers."

1st November. General Marshall, having decided to exploit his successes, formed a column under General Fanshawe consisting of the two cavalry brigades, artillery, and the 54th Infantry Brigade. This column reached a village 12 miles south of Mosul, and then, in order to protect the Christian inhabitants in this town, the Mosul vilayet was cleared of the remnants of the Turkish troops.

10th November. Turkish troops withdrew to Nisibin, and we took possession of the Mosul vilayet; and as General Marshall writes in Dispatches: "The long protracted campaign in Mesopotamia was thus brought to a highly successful conclusion."

CHAPTER II

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

CO-OPERATION. "It is only by effective co-operation that the component parts of any force . . . can develop the full measure of their strength."—*Field Service Regulations*.

1. There was excellent co-operation in the action at Shiala at dawn on the 11th April, 1917. Also the situation leading up to it was created by the excellent co-operation between the cavalry and General Marshall's column.

By the 7th April General Marshall's column had arrived at the Kawar Reach. The cavalry then reported that the Turkish 13th Corps, 500 sabres, 6,000 rifles, with 25 guns, were advancing along the Khalis Canal from the Kifri road to attack the right flank of General Marshall's column.

General Marshall, owing to this timely information, was able to deal with this situation. He left the 38th Brigade to watch the River Adhaim, while with the rest of his force he marched in an easterly direction.

At dawn on the 11th April he struck the enemy north-west of Shiala. An encounter attack took place which resulted in the Turks being driven back to the Arab-bu-Abin trenches with 1,000 casualties. On the 15th the Turks withdrew to the Jabal Hamrin foothills beyond Deli Abbas. Here the Turks were observed by a column under General Keary, consisting of the Cavalry Division, less two regiments, and one horse artillery battery, and of the 13th Division, less yeomanry, a field artillery brigade, a company R.E., and the 38th Brigade.

General Marshall then, with the 35th Brigade, the cavalry not included in General Keary's column, returned to the River Adhaim and joined up with the 38th Brigade at Dugama on the 17th April.

Then owing to the excellent co-operation of all arms the River Adhaim was crossed on the night 17/18th April.

The enemy, 2,000 strong, were holding the right bank of the River Adhaim. The cavalry demonstrated upstream, and also a demonstration was made at the old ford, and when the enemy's attention was diverted to this northern flank the actual crossing took place unknown to the enemy much lower

down the river, and the cliffs opposite the crossing-place were occupied.

During the night two battalions crossed, in pontoons, the river near its mouth, and were able to rush the Turks in their position with very slight loss. As soon as they were established north of Kabaj Village a bridge was thrown across the river.

Then there was excellent co-operation between cavalry and artillery and infantry. At 12.30 hours after an accurate and effective artillery bombardment, three battalions successfully attacked the enemy's position, while the cavalry enveloped the Turks' right flank and cut them off from the River Tigris.

2. On the 25th and 26th February, 1917, there was excellent co-operation during the advance from Kut on the north bank of the River Tigris against the retreating Turks between the Navy, Air Force, and the 3rd Corps.

Our aeroplanes throughout the 25th February followed up the retreating Turks, and made effective attacks with Lewis guns and bombs, of which they dropped 94 on different targets. During the evening they bombed a boat-bridge which the Turks were towing upstream from Bughaila, causing their steamer to slip its tow and thus letting their boats drift downstream. The naval flotilla, *Tarantula*, *Mantis*, *Moth*, *Gadfly*, and *Butterfly*, passed the Shumran bridge at 08.00 hours, and were able to co-operate with their guns in the attack on the Turkish trenches made by the 38th Brigade.

During the fighting on the morning of the 25th February the 38th Brigade was checked by the enemy's rifle and machine gun fire. The 39th Brigade then took up the fighting on its northern flank, and attempted to envelop the Turks' left flank. They were not able to carry out this envelopment, but they gained a footing in the Turks' first line, and carried on their advance into the Turks' second line, 600 yds. west of the first line. In this they were closely supported by the 55th and 66th Field Artillery Brigades. They came into action in the open, and brought their guns within 1,200 yds. of the enemy's position. The naval guns also at this stage co-operated effectively. A third Turkish line was then captured owing to effective co-operation from the guns, and owing to the vigorous offensive action of the infantry. Counter-attacks against our troops in this third line were repulsed owing to artillery support.

On the 26th February the enemy continued to retreat.* By 15.00 hours they had got out of reach of our cavalry pursuit. The Navy now co-operated effectively with gun fire. The flotilla went upstream at full speed, and after passing Bughaila large numbers of Turks were overtaken. The ships then passed the Turkish rearguard and overtook the rear of the enemy's main body, and opened fire at very short range with all available weapons. The Turkish vessels within range were forced to surrender. The action of the Navy turned the Turkish retreat into a rout, although the 14th Division had covered in some cases 25 miles, and were not able to keep up with the rapidly withdrawing rearguards.

3. There was, however, lack of adequate co-operation by the cavalry during these operations. They did not employ vigorous mounted action. Their movements were slow and their handling indicated passivity and initiative in attempting to envelop the enemy's northern flank by making full use of their mobility. The Cavalry Division began to cross the bridge at the Shumran crossing at 09.10 hours on the 24th February, 1917. It was not until after 11.00 hours that they began to pass through the 14th Division near the Dahra ridges, 2 miles to the north of the bridge. Then, when it was reported that the Turks were retreating in a westerly direction and their rear parties could be seen, no attempt was made to outflank them, and to cut them off. As soon as the cavalry had passed the infantry the two brigades wheeled to the left and then dismounted at a position in which they remained for the rest of the day.

It was reported that 2,500 Turks only were holding the Dry Channel, so that had the cavalry been boldly handled against the enemy's left flank and rear, their co-operation might have led to decisive results.

On the 25th February there was not effective co-operation by the cavalry. In reporting on the operations on this day the Turkish 18th Corps Commander wrote that "the resistance of the 51st Division and the lack of determination on the part of the enemy enabled the Corps to extricate itself and to continue its retirement during the night to a point 20 miles upstream." In commenting on this Turkish dispatch the author of the *Official History*, Vol. III, writes that Muhammad Amin indicates that our Cavalry Division was lacking in determination.

At any rate on this day, the 25th February, 1917, the

cavalry operations had no decisive effect, and there was no active co-operation with the 38th and 39th Brigades who had 556 casualties during their arduous frontal attacks throughout the day. It had been hoped that when the Cavalry Division had reached a position by 11.30 hours 4 miles north-east of Imam Mahdi, the enemy's flank would have been turned by mounted action. This co-operation would have eased the situation on the front of the 13th Division who were heavily engaged with the enemy holding successive lines on their front. When, however, the 6th Cavalry Brigade at 13.45 hours were 4 miles north north-west of Imam Mahdi they came under hostile shell fire, and started to make a dismounted frontal attack.

Later they were joined by the 7th Cavalry Brigade, who prolonged their line.

At 14.30 hours the Commander received orders by wireless to operate against the Turkish bridge at Bughaila.

The Division was then not concentrated until 17.30 hours, and it was then considered necessary to withdraw to water in the Tigris. A withdrawal of 12 miles was consequently made to the bank of the Tigris close to 13th Divisional Headquarters.

4. On the 9th March, 1917, at Umm-at-Tubal the indecisive action was due to ineffective co-operation on the part of the cavalry with the infantry. Information had on the previous day been received that the Turks occupied about 3 miles of trenches along the Umm-at-Tubal sandhills, and another line of trenches about 5 miles long between Aswad and the River Tigris. At dawn on the 9th March the 6th Cavalry Brigade was within 700 yds. of the located position at Umm-at-Tubal. At this time it would have helped the operations enormously if the cavalry had made a direct mounted attack against the enemy in their front, especially as the Turks were not aware of their proximity at this time. The task of the infantry would then have been considerably easier throughout the day's fighting which had to take place for the occupation of these sandhills, which might now have been captured if the cavalry had been boldly handled, and had acted with promptness and determination in galloping the enemy's position. The cavalry Commander, however, decided to move in a westerly direction, and to operate later against the enemy's right flank.

At 09.00 hours, just as the 28th Infantry Brigade with its

supporting artillery was getting into position to attack the enemy at a point about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of Shawa Khan, the Cavalry Division began to withdraw back to water at the Tigris before they had even located the enemy's western flank.

General Davies, commanding the advanced guard of the 7th Division, then had to endeavour to locate the enemy's right flank, and in the absence of the cavalry to envelop it.

Accordingly, he sent two battalions on this mission. Although the 7th Divisional Commander reinforced both the frontal and flank attacking troops, and although short advances were made to gain contact with the enemy, yet they were turned out of their positions, and their right flank was not turned. The Cavalry Division did not co-operate further as on their return from watering their horses they were exhausted, and failed to carry out their allotted rôle of locating the enemy's flank and getting round it, and they withdrew to bivouac near Shawa Khan.

5. There was lack of co-operation on the 14th December, 1916. The advance of the 39th Brigade of the 13th Division was slow on this day up the eastern bank of the River Hai owing to the fact that touch had been lost with the cavalry, who were not co-operating closely with the troops on the left bank of the River Hai. The opposition encountered by the 39th Brigade throughout the day was slight, and yet, owing to this lack of co-operation, by the evening this brigade was not beyond Umm-es-Saad, with its left on the river and its right 2 miles to the east. The Cavalry Division returned for the night behind the infantry outposts to Atab.

6. The success of the operations for the clearing of the Khadairi Bend between the 7th and 19th January was due to the co-operation of all available artillery and infantry.

We had not for a long time definitely defeated the Turks. On this occasion they were driven out of carefully entrenched positions with a demoralizing effect on their troops. The operations started with general artillery activity on the whole front on the 7th and 8th January, and with a special bombardment against the Abdul Hassan position in order to cut the wire there. The 7th Division co-operated by diverting the enemy's attention from the main operation by shelling and making raids on the Sannaiyat position on the 9th January, while the 3rd Division assaulted and cleared the Khadairi Bend. The 3rd Corps co-operated by

demonstrating against the Hai bridgeheads' system, and by sending a force to the Shumran Bend. The cavalry were to co-operate by making a raid on Bughaila. Actually the cavalry were unable to co-operate, but the other plans were executed as ordered, and the result was that the 3rd Division occupied its objectives with little loss by 09.00 hours on the 9th January. The artillery bombardment carried out by three batteries of the 13th Division started at 07.30 hours, and was continued for an hour with the artillery of the 3rd Division consisting of thirty-six 18-pounders, six 4.5 in. howitzers, and four 60-pounders. At 08.45 hours for a quarter of an hour there was an intensive bombardment when it lifted to the enemy's rear positions, and then the 8th and 9th Brigades attacked on a front of 1,800 yds. with four battalions. The objective, the southern half of the enemy's front system, was captured with little loss. The enemy counter-attacked vigorously an hour later against both flanks of the 8th and 9th Brigades, but owing to excellent artillery co-operation, and our vigorous hand to hand fighting, they were repulsed. On the other hand, we were not able to extend our position, but the ground we had gained was consolidated. On the 10th January owing to close and effective artillery support the whole of the enemy's forward system was occupied. On the following day there was a lack of co-operation between two attacking battalions operating at different times. One battalion attacked on the left along the river bank, and the other battalion attacked from Abdul Hassan. These isolated attacks were in turn dealt with by enfilade fire from across the river, and though at first there was a gain of ground, the subsequent counter-attacks by the enemy caused us to evacuate the ground gained.

After this hurried attack there was a systematic and deliberate converging advance, accompanied by effective artillery co-operation in dealing with the enemy's positions.

Thus there were a series of short advances, in which gradually, owing to the co-operation of the artillery the infantry of the 3rd Division were within 200 yds. of the enemy's last position. On the night of the 18/19th January the enemy evacuated their trenches. On the morning of the 19th January the whole of the Khadairi Bend was in our possession. The losses in the 8th and 9th Brigades during these frontal attacks on a small front were comparatively small, owing to the effective co-operation of the artillery.

The principle of economy of force : " To economize strength while compelling dissipation of that of the enemy, must be the constant aim of every commander.

"The application of this principle implies the use of the smallest forces for purposes of security, of diverting the enemy's attention, or of containing superior enemy strength, consistent with the attainment of the object in view. This principle is a necessary complement to the principle of concentration." *F.S.R.*

The basis of General Maude's operations from the time when he began to advance to the Hai on the 13th December, 1916, until the Hai triangle was captured by the 5th February, 1917, was to compel the Turks to dissipate their forces over the possible points of attack between Sannaiyat and Bughaila. This enabled General Maude to effect a surprise crossing at the Shumran Bend, the success of which was further assured by attacks previously delivered at Sannaiyat, and by the feint crossings at Maqasis and at Kut, which drew the Turks away from the actual point of attack. Our turning movements throughout this period caused the Turks to dissipate their forces over 25 miles of country, and enabled us to economize our strength on the northern bank of the River Tigris, where our 7th Division contained 3,000 rifles and 19 guns at Sannaiyat.

The Turks had their available 13,200 rifles and 91 guns dissipated as follows—

Between Kut and Sannaiyat were 1,000 rifles and 6 guns. Between Shumran and Kut were 1,800 rifles and 46 guns ; at the Dahra Bend were 6,500 rifles and 14 guns.

Between Shumran and Bughaila were 900 rifles and 6 guns. The remainder were, as already stated, at Sannaiyat.

General Maude was, therefore, able to make a methodical reduction of enemy positions in each bend of the river from east to west in turn. Their forces were thus maintained on a dangerously long front, with their left held at Sannaiyat. This was particularly dangerous for the enemy, as they had no railway, and in every way their mobility was inferior to ours. In order to penetrate our line south of the river between Sannaiyat and Kut they would have to cross the river in strength, and for such an operation they had no means at their disposal. Thus the Dahra Bend was cleared between the 6th and 16th February by the 13th and 14th

Divisions at a cost of 1,000 casualties. In this operation we captured 2,000 prisoners. Before that the Hai triangle had been cleared between the 20th January and the 5th February, at a cost of 3,700 casualties. In this action the 39th and 40th Brigades, each on a front of 900 yds., advanced up both banks of the River Hai supported by the fire of 74 guns and 30 howitzers. The attack was successfully carried out on the 25th February, and the enemy's forward positions were carried. They continued to dissipate their forces, and to keep them on an extended front, although General Maude was only attacking them on a front of 1,800 yds.

Their counter-attacks were made only by local troops. On the following day our attacks were continued on both banks of the River Hai on a similar front, and their second line was captured. These successes were extended and the Turks did not reinforce the point of attack; nor did they attempt to strike a blow in any other direction.

Again, on the 1st February we were able to continue our attacks with two battalions on the west of the River Hai. On the 3rd February the attack was continued by the 8th Brigade, and the east bank of the River Hai was cleared. On the night 4/5th February the Turks evacuated the Hai position without making any effort to concentrate at the decisive place.

Similarly, between the 7th and 19th January, 1917, the Khadairi Bend was cleared by the 8th and 9th Brigades. The Turks made no effort to reinforce their troops in this area.

"Surprise is the most effective and powerful weapon in war. Surprise consists in the creation of a situation for which the enemy is unprepared. Its result is to establish superiority which may be moral, physical, or material." *F.S.R.*

1. General Maude, in the majority of his attacks, attempted to introduce the element of surprise. By feint attacks, by secret preparations, by night operations, by secretly massing his artillery, and by making use of his cavalry against distant objectives he endeavoured to mystify and mislead his enemy.

For instance, at the crossing of the Shumran Bend, great care was taken to mislead the Turks as to the actual point of crossing. The point selected was as distant as possible, namely, 25 miles, from the Sannaiyat position to which the Turks' left flank was tied down.

The conformation of the ground prevented the enemy from their position on Dahra ridges from gaining direct and effective observation. There was extreme secrecy. General Maude dealt direct with his chief R.E. officer for all the details of his plan, which was fully known only by this R.E. officer.

Opposite Kut preparations for bridging were actually made, and large numbers of artillery observation ladders were erected. A serious attack was made at Sannaiyat, and by the evening of the 22nd February the 7th Division was in possession of the enemy's first two lines. By 17.30 hours on the 23rd we were in occupation of the enemy's third and fourth lines. The enemy, therefore, were engaged in holding their position 25 miles from the point where we were crossing the river. There were also effective feints. There was an actual crossing at Maqasis during the night 22nd/23rd February, and the 40th Brigade during this night distracted the attention of the Turks by another feint including splashing of planks and the movement of transport. The result was that the Turks moved troops and guns into the Kut peninsula. Thus a surprise crossing at the Shumran Bend was possible before Turkish reinforcements could be brought there. In addition the simultaneous crossing by 42 pontoons before daylight on the 23rd February at three different points divided the enemy's attention, and misled him as to the actual danger point which for them was at No. 1 Ferry, where by 05.45 hours the Norfolks safely crossed just as it was getting light.

All preparations for the crossing were made under cover of darkness.

During the night the 39th Brigade reached the Nahr-al-Massaq to cover the artillery of the 14th Division and the Bridging Train, and the 37th Brigade with their pontoon parties also got into position unknown to the Turks in three columns near the ferries.

The Turks were thus completely surprised, and, in spite of their opposition and in spite of the fact that the current in the river, 1,040 ft. wide, was running six knots at 05.30 hours on the 23rd February, 1917, the troops at all three ferries started to launch their pontoons. As it was getting light the Norfolks had seized a part of the left river bank which they were able to hold and extend.

2. On the other hand, the first attempt to cross the River Diyala failed, chiefly because there was no surprise. There

were no feints, no attempts at alternative crossings, no covering fire, no detailed and technical reconnaissance, no thorough organization. The moon was nearly full at the time. The attempt to cross was at the point where the Turks must have expected us, as it was made where an old bridge had been in existence, and where the banks were conveniently ramped down to the water's edge. The result was that though the river was 120 yds. wide with a current of 2 miles an hour, that is, about a third as wide and swift as the River Tigris, yet at midnight when the 38th Brigade with its pontoons attempted the passage 50 men were killed, and 3 pontoons were disabled by the Turks' rapid and accurate machine gun and rifle fire. At 04.00 hours on the 8th March the attempt to cross was abandoned, and our force retired 2 miles south.

3. Again, on the night 8/9th March the Turks were not surprised. Another crossing over the River Diyala was started at the same place, but arrangements for crossing were not satisfactory. The result was that under a heavy bombardment only a hundred men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment were able to cross and to form a bridgehead. It was not until the Turks had withdrawn all their troops from their river front except the 44th Regiment and a battalion of the 3rd Regiment and the 33rd Cavalry Regiment that the 38th Brigade with the Wiltshire Regiment were able to ferry across the River Diyala on the night 10/11th March, and were able to get two battalions across by 06.00 hours on the 11th March.

The Turks were completely surprised by our crossing of the River Adhaim on the night 17/18th April.

The cavalry were sent upstream, and a demonstration was made at the old ford. The actual crossing was made unknown to the Turks lower down, and the cliffs opposite were seized without a casualty. Further, two battalions crossed during the night in pontoons near the mouth of the river, without the Turks suspecting their presence. Just before dawn at 04.50 hours the Turks' positions on the cliff above the crossing place were rushed with very little loss on our side, as the Turks in this position were completely surprised.

4. On the 23rd April Ali Ihsan, commanding the 13th Corps, made a movement which was intended to mislead us as to his intentions.

However, we were not surprised, and were able easily to

counter his operations. He had withdrawn the bulk of his Corps by forced marches behind the screen of the Jabal Hamrin mountains to the Adhaim gap, after withdrawing through the Diyala gap. He then marched his force rapidly down the River Adhaim against our eastern flank.

He tried to mislead General Marshall by sending a detachment on this day, the 24th April, to demonstrate at Deli Abbas, where he drove back our cavalry. However, he was met 25 miles from the mouth of the Adhaim on this day by General Marshall's column consisting of the 35th, 38th, and 40th Brigades and 7th Cavalry Brigade, and was forced to retire to the foot of the Jabal Hamrin to Band-i-Adhaim.

On the 30th April, after General Marshall had followed up the Turks, he was able to gain a tactical surprise at the battle of Band-i-Adhaim. The Turks were entrenched in a strong position across the river. During the evening of the 29th April, 1918, General Marshall feinted against the Turks' left flanks with the 38th Brigade. He made a dawn attack with the 40th Brigade against the enemy's centre covering the Band-i-Adhaim village, supported on the west of the river by the 35th Brigade covering the Turks in a position called the Boot.

The Turks were surprised and the attack was so successful that the two forward battalions of the 40th Brigade not only captured their objective, but passed through it to a distance of nearly 2 miles after capturing 300 prisoners and 8 guns. Then, unfortunately, these two battalions were in turn surprised. A heavy dust storm set in. The Turkish Commander, Ali Ihsan brought his reserve across the river, passed unnoticed in front of the position taken up by the 38th Brigade who were covering the right flank of the 40th Brigade, and struck the right flank of the two advanced battalions. These battalions were surprised and driven back to their starting point through the village until they were again in touch with their Brigade reserves, who checked the Turks by their fire. The Turks, however, inflicted much loss on the two battalions, recaptured 7 guns, and the bulk of the prisoners. It was not until the sand storm cleared that we could have the advantage of artillery support, and could drive the Turks back again through the village of Band-i-Adhaim.

5. The final operations undertaken against the Turks, starting on the 7th October, were concluded by an operation

in which the Turks were completely surprised, when by the 27th October the Turks, engaged with our 17th Division, were isolated from the 6th Turkish Army headquarters. On the 26th October, 1918, the Turks were engaged with our 17th Division on the right bank of the River Tigris, in a position covering Humr. While our frontal attacks were being pressed the 11th Cavalry Brigade marched right round the enemy's position, and forded the River Tigris behind the enemy's defences, and seized the Huwaish gorge, astride the road to Mosul. The Armoured Car Force cut the enemy's telegraph line to Mosul. On the 27th October, 1918, the cavalry were joined by the 53rd Brigade, who had marched from the Lesser Zab. On the 28th October the 17th Division forced the Turks out of their Humr position to another one 6 miles south of Huwaish. Their reserves coming from the north to help them found their advance blocked by our cavalry, now reinforced by the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the 53rd Brigade. On the 29th October the 17th Division again pressed the Turks back to another position north of Shergat. Here they were assaulted frontally. Their reinforcements again tried to break through from the north, but without success. They could thus get no relief.

General Marshall thus describes the position in his Dispatches: "Gripped as in a vice, with his men packed in ravines, which were raked by our guns from across the River Tigris, Ismail Hakki, the Turkish Commander, found himself in a hopeless position. All attempts to break through had failed, communication with the Turkish C.-in-C. at Mosul had been rendered impossible, and no relief was in sight. At dawn on the 30th October just as our troops were about to renew the attacks white flags appeared all along the Turkish lines, and later on Ismail Hakki surrendered in person. The total captures during the operations amounted to: 11,322 prisoners, 51 guns, 130 machine guns, over 2,000 animals, 3 paddle steamers."

6. By the middle of October, 1917, the Turks had advanced to El Huweslat, 8 miles north of Samarra. Here the Turks were entrenching and, therefore, General Maude ordered an attack before they had time to strengthen their position.

A night operation was accordingly carried out by the 7th Division on the night 24/25th October, 1917. The enemy was surprised and driven out of their positions.

The Turks now fell back on Maashad-ad-Dur, 18 miles

north of Samarra. Here the enemy's position was definitely located and engaged by the 28th Brigade at dawn, after a night march. The enemy were in position on the left bank of the river opposite Dur (20 miles upstream of Samarra). The 28th Brigade made a night march and surprised the enemy at daybreak on the 3rd November, and captured the position. After slight opposition the Turks withdrew 20 miles to Tekrit, the main advanced base of the Turkish army in Mesopotamia. The capture of the enemy's position at Dur with very few casualties was due to the secret nature of our concentration.

7. In April, 1918, when the Russians' advanced troops had withdrawn, it was necessary to take action towards the Turks' advanced base at Kifri, in order to prevent the entry of small mobile forces of the enemy into Persia. Operations were, therefore, undertaken up the Mosul road. A mobile column reached Kifri by the middle of April. The Turks were completely surprised, and retired without waiting for our attack. They retreated on Kirkuk. The cavalry overtook one of their columns, and immediately charged it and captured 540 prisoners, as the Turkish column was surprised and demoralized.

8. The operations of the 12th, 42nd, and Cavalry Brigades on the Euphrates between the 27th and 29th September, 1917, were in the nature of surprises. The Turks held an advanced position 4 miles east of Ramadi on the Mushaid Ridge. Their main position lay 1 mile to the east and to the south of Ramadi.

Our plan was to mystify and mislead the Turks, by turning the southern flank of the Mushaid Ridge, attacking Ramadi from the south, with the bulk of the column after securing a crossing over the Euphrates Valley Canal.

The cavalry were to operate west of the Aziziya Valley Canal, and to get astride of the enemy's communications with Hit by blocking the Aleppo road. It was hoped to induce a belief in the mind of the enemy's commander that the main attack was to come from the west on the River Euphrates. Therefore, the river was bridged at Madhij, 8 miles from the Turkish outposts. Also a road was made up the left bank of the River Euphrates. At 18.00 hours on the 27th September, two columns left Madhij. The 12th Brigade was on the right, and the 42nd Brigade was on the left. These columns reached positions during the night

from which Mushaid Ridge could be attacked at dawn, while an infantry detachment marched round the northern side by Lake Habbaniya, in order to occupy important tactical features on and behind the southern flank of the Mushaid position, as well as to hold a dam on the Euphrates Valley Canal.

The Turks were not prepared for these moves. They expected us to attack their left flank. At dawn we bombarded the main crest of the Mushaid Ridge, but the Turks had evacuated it, as they had been completely surprised. They then shelled the ridge in the belief that we were occupying it. Again they were completely mystified. We had not gone on to this ridge, but instead, as soon as we had ascertained that the enemy had left it, we changed the direction of our attack. At 07.00 hours our columns had crossed the dam, while the cavalry covered by the Mushaid Ridge, moved west across the Aziziya Canal to a position astride the Aleppo road, in order to cut off the enemy's retreat in a northerly direction. At 16.00 hours the cavalry had reached their position on a line of hills at right angles to the river. At night they occupied strong points along these hills on a front of 3 miles.

Also at 07.00 hours on the 28th September, the 12th Brigade was withdrawn, and marching west behind the 42nd Brigade, became the left wing of the force. The Turks were again surprised, as they had not anticipated a wide turning movement. They considered that the waterless nature of the country was a sufficient protection against an advance on an extended front. It was owing to this faulty appreciation of the situation that we were able to envelop them before they realized the new situation. Our system of water supply by Ford vans gave us unexpected mobility. Twelve thousand gallons were conveyed from the Euphrates to our troops, in some cases up to the firing line, by motor convoy. The vans travelled 75 miles between the river and the front in a day. At 13.00 hours on the 28th September, the 42nd Brigade attacked Ramadi Ridge, where the Turks were engaged, while the 12th Brigade was working round to attack Aziziya Ridge on the left. A firm footing on the lower slopes of this ridge was secured before dark. That night the infantry held the enemy between two canals, while our cavalry cut off their retreat.

On the morning of the 29th September, at 06.15 hours, the 12th Brigade resumed the attack on the Aziziya Ridge, while

the 42nd Brigade continued to advance and to capture successive positions. By 07.30 hours the 39th Garhwalis had seized the bridge over the River Euphrates, 1 mile east of Ramadi, where the Aleppo road crosses the Aziziya Canal. Over this bridge all guns and transport that escaped from Ramadi would have to pass. They captured 3 guns and some prisoners. The 90th Punjabis entered Ramadi and captured Ahmed Bey, about the same time. The rest of the brigade cleared the Shaikh Tafaja Ridge. Previously during the night Ahmed Bey had made an effort to break through the cavalry on the north. Our troops were ready for them, and were not surprised. The fight started at 03.00 hours, and lasted till dawn, mainly against the 14th Hussars, but owing to accurate horse artillery, Hotchkiss, and rifle fire, the Turks never got within 50 yds. of the cavalry trenches. By 11.00 hours the whole of the Turkish force, 3,454 men, 13 guns, and 12 machine guns, surrendered.

SECURITY consists in making provision against any action of the enemy which would prejudice the attainment of the object. The aim in providing for security must be to ensure liberty of action, to be prepared to meet and defeat the enemy's counter-strokes, to conserve strength, and to maintain essential interests. The chief considerations which govern action in obtaining security are to guard against surprise, to preserve morale against subservient influences, to dispose protective detachments so as to guard what is vital, and allow forces to move and rest undisturbed." *F.S.R*

1. On arrival at Baghdad on the 11th March, 1917, General Maude had to take urgent steps to ensure the security of his force, while the climate was still favourable. This town was difficult to hold, owing to the many converging routes by which the Turks could advance to attack it. Also if the Turks were allowed to remain close to the town they would be able to inundate the surrounding country, and to isolate Baghdad. Consequently, columns had to be sent out from Baghdad up both banks of the Tigris, and to the Euphrates to control the inundation of these rivers. A fourth column had to be sent up the River Diyala.

Reinforcements which arrived from India were added to the troops already employed for protective duties on the lines of communication. The lines of communication were successfully reorganized to deal with the altered conditions.

During the ensuing hot weather, owing to the measures taken to ensure security for the force at the front and on the L. of C., there was almost complete immunity from raids and attacks by Turks and tribal Arabs.

The operations for the safeguarding of Baghdad from floods were as follows—

On the 13th March the 7th Infantry Brigade group was sent to seize Falluja.

This place was reached on the 19th March, and was found to be occupied by the Turks, who withdrew after some opposition. The possession of Falluja was essential for the safeguarding of Baghdad, as the River Euphrates in this area is appreciably higher than the Tigris at Baghdad and the intervening country.

By opening the mouth of the Sakhlawiya Canal, the lake Aqarquf can be filled, and the country south of it can be flooded. This might make communication between Baghdad and the River Euphrates impossible.

After some opposition from the enemy in the vicinity of Falluja, estimated at 2,000 rifles and 4 guns, with gunboats and barges, this place was entered on the 19th March. It was then found that the canal had been so effectively cut that its repair was impossible. The road and Decauville railway were, however, saved by the construction of bunds along the Nukhta road, and thus the communications with the Euphrates were maintained. The Turks withdrew to Ramadi, 25 miles upstream. The 7th Brigade remained at Falluja. To safeguard Baghdad from inundation from the north, the 1st Corps (less the 3rd Division) took up the pursuit of the Turkish 18th Corps west of the River Tigris, starting at 23.30 hours on the 13th March. The 3rd Corps commander dispatched the 40th Brigade to Daudiya to secure the bunds on the left bank of the River Tigris.

The remainder of the 3rd Corps operated between the Tigris and Diyala, with the object of preventing the junction between the divided units of the Turkish 6th Army.

To secure our right flank, to impede the retreat of the Turkish 13th Corps, and to assist the Russian pursuit, the 3rd Division, with the 7th Cavalry Brigade and attached troops, moved up the east bank of the Diyala.

The operations to secure the Tigris and Diyala fronts were as follows—

General Cobbe, commanding two squadrons and the 7th

Division, made a night march on the night 13/14th March, to a covering position at Bait Nawab, on the right bank of the River Tigris, 12 miles south of Mushahida station, to attack the Turkish position held by 5,000 Turks, with 24 guns between the River Tigris and Bhopal Hill on a 6-mile front. In the centre of their position was a hill—Tel Gosh—from which the whole flat open plain to the south could be commanded. There were three lines of trenches at this important point. Behind this position there was excellent cover for the movement of reserves. The Turks had evidently expected our attack on the river where also they had entrenchments. General Cobbe, however, attacked the enemy's right flank on either side of the railway.

The 28th Brigade and a field brigade R.A. advanced east of the railway. The 21st Brigade, a field brigade R.A., with two battalions of the 19th Brigade in support, were to attack west of the railway. The advance of the 21st Brigade began at 15.20 hours on the 14th March, and by 16.00 hours was in line with the 28th Brigade. The cavalry co-operated on our left flank. The delay in launching the attack was due to the difficulty of locating the enemy, partly due to mirage. The enemy were able to bring enfilade fire to bear on our flanks, and to delay our advance considerably.

Also the Turks opened fire at long range. There was much hard fighting by the 21st Brigade to capture Bhopal Hill.

Till this dominating point was in our possession it was not possible for the 28th Brigade to push on east of the railway. By 18.30 hours, after an intense bombardment, two companies of the Black Watch led the assault on to this hill and captured it. The Bhopal Infantry were left to hold the hill, while the 21st and 28th Brigades advanced to the railway station, which was seized at 2330 hours. General Cobbe described "the endurance and determination of officers and men, who had marched and fought practically continuously for over 24 hours, as being above praise." It was not possible, in view of the exhaustion of the troops, to carry out an immediate pursuit.

Nor was it safe for the 7th Division to advance along the railway on the right bank until the left bank was cleared of the enemy. Therefore, after clearing the battle-field the troops returned to Baghdad on the 17th March, leaving one Brigade to safeguard the river bunds.

Thus, after the Mushahida battle on the 14th March,

General Maude had to clear the left bank of the River Diyala, to join the Russians and to prevent the 13th Turkish Corps crossing the River Diyala at Qizil Robat. On the 14th March, 1917, a small party of the 14th Division was sent up the right bank of the River Diyala in Ford vans. This party reached the river bank opposite Baquba on the 15th, while a squadron of cavalry and a section of field artillery marched by road. On the 16th March General Edwardes, commanding the 8th Infantry Brigade (less $1\frac{1}{2}$ battalions) a field brigade R.A. (less 2 batteries), and some R.E., Pioneers, and part of a Bridging Train was left at Baghdad for operations on the River Diyala. General Edwardes' mission on this flank was at first to seize Baquba and construct a bridge there, and then to defeat the enemy's local detachment acting as a flank guard to the Turkish 13th Corps at Khanikin.

On the night 17/18th March, General Edwardes successfully crossed the River Diyala. A feint was made 3 miles above Baquba, and two battalions were ferried across during the night below Bahriz, which was rushed early on the 18th March. The Turks occupying this village were completely surprised, and withdrew to Baquba, which was occupied later in the day. General Keary now concentrated a force for the further operations dealing with the 2nd and 6th Turkish Divisions stated to be retiring in front of the Russians at Kermanshah. If this operation was successful General Maude's right flank would be secured. If the Turks could be dealt with by General Keary's column on one side and by Baratoff on the other side, both their divisions, a force consisting of 800 sabres, 9,000 rifles, and 50 guns, might be put out of action. General Keary had the 7th Cavalry Brigade (less 13th Hussars) the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades, 20 guns, and 4 howitzers, 2 companies of sappers and miners, and a Pioneer Battalion, less 1 company.

On the 19th March when General Keary heard that 500 Turks were advancing on Baquba from Shahraban, and that 1,500 were approaching Shahraban from Qizil Robat, he was instructed to conceal his strength, draw them on, and deal vigorously with them. Accordingly, he sent forward the 7th Cavalry Brigade, supported by two infantry battalions and a field battery, to locate and hold the enemy, but it was not till the 21st that the enemy were encountered holding Shahraban as the Jalali bridge over the 40 ft. wide canal was broken. At Shahraban General Keary was delayed

till the 23rd March, when the Turks evacuated the place. He then pursued the Turks up to the foot of the Jabal Hamrin. General Maude now had to face a new situation, and in order to secure his right flank he sent a column consisting of the 40th Infantry Brigade, two 18-pounders, and one howitzer battery on 24th March to occupy Deltawa, Jadida, and Sindiya, as it was thought that the Turkish 18th Corps, consisting of 550 sabres, 5,570 rifles, and 34 guns, might advance from Samarra down both banks of the Tigris, and also that the Turkish 2nd Division and Cavalry Brigade would soon be near Khanikin. The Cavalry Division (less a regiment and section of horse artillery) was to move to Tokana on the 24th March, while General Keary continued his operations against the troops in the Jabal Hamrin on the left bank of the River Diyala, and the cavalry from Tokana was to secure the bridges over the Khalis Canal at Deli Abbas and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of this place. General Keary estimated the enemy to be about 3,000 rifles with 12 guns. His own attacking force was stronger only by 1,600 rifles and 14 guns. He decided, however, to hold the enemy with the 8th Brigade, while he made an outflanking movement with the 9th Brigade. Accordingly the 9th Brigade made a night march, and reached Haruniya Canal at 04.30 hours on the 24th March. This canal was a formidable obstacle, and had to be bridged. Then the next obstacle, the Ruz Canal, had to be bridged.

It was not until 20.30 hours that the Ruz Canal bridge was completed. The 8th Infantry Brigade had been stopped at the Ruz Canal by 06.00 hours. The position beyond this canal was seen to be very strong, and to be occupied in depth. Also there were many canals between the left of the 8th Brigade and the River Diyala. The attack had to be postponed until it was possible to advance by our right flank. The attack, therefore, had to be postponed until dawn on the 25th March.

General Keary's plan then was to hold the enemy in front with two battalions, while the bulk of the column crossed the Balad Ruz south of the present position, and attacked the left flank of the Turkish position. On the 25th March the Cavalry Division was to secure the left flank of the troops advancing to the attack east of the River Diyala. Their advance, however, was very slow owing to faulty maps and to the difficulties of the intersected country. By

the time they had located the enemy it was too late in the day to start operations, and accordingly they withdrew 8 miles south of the enemy's located position. The operations of the infantry on this day were similarly affected by the difficulties of the country. One column, which was to envelop the Turks' left flank inclined inwards to their left, with the result that they struck the part of the enemy's position on the Jabal Hamrin, where it had been reinforced. The 9th Brigade suffered heavily in their frontal attack, and in order to extricate this brigade in its withdrawal, the whole of the 8th Brigade were in action. The result was that the Turks were able to cross to the right bank of the River Diyala just before the 8th Brigade reached Qizil Robat on 1st April, 1917.

Thus the Turks had adequately secured their position in two directions. Ali Ihsan held off the Russians on the Pai Tak Pass with two battalions, while he brought the remainder of the 2nd Division through Qizil Robat. He held a strong position on the Jabal Hamrin with the 6th Division, and when he had checked General Keary's column and had enabled the remainder of his army to get clear, successfully withdrew this rearguard.

Khalil Pasha had now transferred the 18th Corps across the River Tigris to the Adhaim river, in order to join up with the 13th Division on the line Es Sued—Sindiya. With the danger of this junction General Maude could not advance up the west bank of the Tigris. Therefore, the 13th Division, concentrated behind the Sindiya—Deltawa line, attacked the 18th Corps near Marah, and drove it across the River Adhaim. Khalil Pasha now tried to unite his 13th and 18th Corps by bringing the 13th Corps back via Kifri to join him. General Maude at this time secured his position by reorganizing his L. of C. into four sections, and by bringing to Baghdad the 15th Division from the River Euphrates. On his lines of communication on the River Tigris he now had 16 battalions and 11 guns. On the River Euphrates he had a cavalry regiment, three battalions, 8 guns, and 2 armoured trains. At the front he had one cavalry and five infantry divisions.

Now it was desirable for the security of the British position at Baghdad to occupy the northern end of the Baghdad—Samarra railway. By the 4th April the Turkish 13th Corps was in the vicinity of Kifri; their 18th Corps was about Balad and Samarra. General Maude now intended to deal

with the Turkish forces at Balad and on the River Adhaim. Accordingly he formed two columns. Each of these columns was to operate on either side of the River Tigris, while the Cavalry Division was to prevent the Turkish 13th Corps detaching troops towards the River Adhaim. This division was told to occupy a position on the 6th April near Deli Abbas.

By the 8th April our column on the right bank of the River Tigris had occupied Balad station, and during the night 8/9th April, the 19th Brigade advanced and captured Harbeh. On the left bank of the Tigris the column under General Marshall, consisting of the 13th Division, a weak cavalry brigade, and some attached troops, reached Kawar Reach on the 7th April, when information was received that the 13th Corps, 6,000 rifles and 25 guns, was moving down from the vicinity of the Kifri road along the Khalis Canal to attack General Marshall's column. It was now necessary to secure this right flank before a further advance could be made. General Marshall then left the 38th Brigade to watch the Adhaim. With the remainder of his column he turned east to meet the advancing Turks. An encounter attack at dawn on the 11th, north-west of Shiala, caused the Turks to withdraw to Arab-bu-Abin, and four days later to the foot-hills beyond Deli Abbas.

When this danger to our right flank was removed Keary's column was left to hold a line about Arab-bu-Abin, and remain in observation. By the 17th April General Marshall concentrated the 35th and 18th Brigades with Cassels' cavalry at Dugama, with the intention of crossing the River Adhaim. This advance would enable General Fane's column on the right bank of the River Tigris to advance with security and would also ease the supply situation, for until General Marshall's column had crossed the River Adhaim the Tigris river-head could not be moved forward with safety. General Maude now intended to make a simultaneous advance up both banks of the River Tigris, with a column under General Cayley containing the Turkish 13th Corps in an entrenched position astride the Khalis Canal, 5 miles north-east of Arab-bu-Abin.

The crossing of the River Adhaim was a complete success on the night 15/18th April. One thousand two hundred prisoners were captured. The enemy were surprised and routed at a loss to us of 73 men.

On the 18th April the column on the right bank now commanded by General Cobbe, and augmented by Cassels' Cavalry Brigade, and by the 8th Brigade, reached a position about 3 miles south-east of Istabulat station. The security and co-operation of the two advancing forces were increased by throwing a bridge across the Tigris at Siniya at the Barura bend. In spite of the strength of the Turkish positions at Istabulat station and their excellent fields of fire and of view from the redoubts, 40 ft. above the plain, on their left flank, and in spite of the Turkish numbers, viz. 7,500 rifles and 32 guns, with 1,550 rifles and 12 guns in reserve near Samarra, we reached Samarra on the morning of 23rd April. Now Ali Ihsan made another effort with his 13th Corps against our right flank, which was, however, adequately secured. Although the Turkish Commander's movements had been rapid, General Marshall was able to meet them.

On the 24th April, when his detachment of 2,300 rifles and 4 guns was demonstrating at Deli Abbas against our cavalry, General Marshall's column, consisting of the 35th, 38th, and 40th Brigades and 7th Cavalry Brigade, met him at Dahuba, and forced him to retire to the foot of the Jabal Hamrin, a distance of 25 miles.

General Marshall's column followed up, and at daybreak on the 30th April attacked and drove the Turks out of the Band-i-Adhaim village, and though they counter-attacked under cover of a dust storm and regained it, they were later driven out. During the night 30/31st April Ali Ihsan withdrew through the Jabal Hamrin. Now General Maude had completely secured his position. He was effectively occupying the Baghdad vilayet, and he controlled the waters of the Tigris, Euphrates, and the Diyala; the country in our rear was pacified, and the road to Persia had been opened.

2. The Mesopotamia Campaign was undertaken primarily to protect our oil interests in Persia, and to safeguard the refineries at Abadan and the 150 miles of pipe-line up to the wells at Maidan.

Seventy-five per cent of the oil used by the Navy comes from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. A second reason was to safeguard the northern end of the Persian Gulf, and thus our flank on the Indian Ocean between the east and the jugular vein of the Empire—the Suez Canal.

By the occupation of Basra we should also safeguard

Egypt, and encourage the Arabs to be loyal, for without their support Turkish invasion of Egypt would be impossible. We started to safeguard our interests on the 6th November, 1914, when H.M.S. *Odin* bombarded the Turkish battery on the shore near Fao fort. It was important to occupy Fao, as it was the land terminal of the Turkish telegraphs, and the starting point of a British cable connecting India with Mesopotamia. As soon as the battery at Fao had been silenced, 600 infantry, a section of mountain guns, and a few engineers were landed, and the telegraph and cable systems were repaired. In order to secure the refinery at Abadan our landing party was re-embarked, and was disembarked 2 miles above the oil works on the right bank. Here General Delamain secured his force in a perimeter camp, and was able to repulse the Turkish attack on the morning of the 11th April. Our position now was further secured by the arrival of General Barrett, with the 18th Infantry Brigade and the 10th Field Brigade, R.A., on the 14th November. General Barrett realized that in order to secure the allegiance of the Arabs a rapid advance was advisable.

Consequently, General Delamain was sent forward to attack the Turks from their position at Saihan, 4 miles upstream from the present camp. This attack was successfully carried out by 3 battalions, supported by 2 mountain batteries on the 15th November. Again, on the 17th November, the Turks were attacked in their position at Zain, 9 miles north of General Barrett's present camp.

The Turks were now reported to be 4,500 strong, with 12 guns; accordingly General Barrett sent forward 2 Brigades (less 1 battalion), 2 mountain and 1 field battery, a Pioneer battalion, and 2 companies of sappers and miners.

Our attack was successfully carried out on the 17th November, and the enemy withdrew to Baljaniya. General Barrett at once decided that as soon as a reconnaissance of the Turks' position and the obstruction in the river had been made, and further supplies had been brought up, another attack must be made. The Turks, however, withdrew to Basra, which was in danger of being looted. Accordingly, General Barrett decided to secure this town as early as possible. This was done by the 22nd November, with the capture of 8 guns, the Turks withdrawing to Zubair (11 miles south-west of Basra) and to Qurna. The Turkish casualties were

estimated at over 1,500. The conquest of this city, with a total annual trade of six million sterling, was a considerable achievement.

General Barrett was now ordered to secure the Basra vilayet, and to consolidate his position, moving up the river if necessary in order to protect the town. For the security of Basra, therefore, he decided to capture Qurna. On the 9th December Qurna was occupied. During the night 8/9th December, General Fry had received the surrender of Subhi Bey, the Turkish Commander of the 38th Division, with 1,300 men and 7 guns. We had now secured control of the delta, the oil refineries at Abadan and the port of Mesopotamia, and had destroyed the greater part of the 38th Division. The Turks, however, could come down on us from three sides, namely, by the River Karun, the River Tigris, and the River Euphrates.

Our position at Qurna was jeopardized by the lack of transport. Our river transport consisted only of 3 steamers and 17 lighters, and with only 300 camels available. The 6th Division, as a whole, was immobile for land operations. The transport shortage must cause detachments and it would be difficult to support them quickly if the Turks threatened our security on either flank, that is, by the Karun or the Euphrates. Actually the Turkish 35th Division came down the Euphrates to Nasiriya, and hostile tribesmen were in the vicinity of Ahwaz. In February, 1915, in order to secure the situation on the River Karun a battalion, 2 mountain guns, and 30 sabres were dispatched to Ahwaz. At Qurna at this time were $9\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 2 squadrons, and 22 guns. At Shaiba were 2 squadrons and half a battalion. At Basra were the bulk of the 12th and 16th Brigades. Qurna, however, soon became secured by the floods, so that troops could be withdrawn from this place, and concentrated in an entrenched and wired perimeter camp at Shaiba, and Ahwaz was occupied by a brigade. For the security of his position, small garrisons also had to be sent to Abadan and to Marid on the River Karun, owing to the hostility of the Arabs. The Turks now concentrated near Barjisiya Wood, 6 miles south-west of Shaiba fort. After we had attacked the enemy on the 13th, and had located approximately their positions east of Barjisiya Wood, General Melliss made a definite attack on the 14th April. The result was that the Turks withdrew. We were unable to follow up owing to lack of

transport, but we had secured the left flank of our position at Basra, and of our lines of communication to the sea.

By the 9th April, General Nixon had taken command of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force. His orders were definitely to secure the lower portion of Mesopotamia, comprising the Basra vilayet and the neighbouring portions affecting operations. Also he was instructed to secure the safety of the oil fields, pipe line, and refineries of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company without prejudice to the main operations. Now the scope of the campaign is somewhat larger than it was when General Barrett had his original orders.

It must be noted, however, that the main theatre of operations against the Turks now was at Gallipoli, where our troops were just landing; then the security of the Suez Canal was more important than the mission allotted to General Nixon.

We had now attained the object for which operations in Mesopotamia had originally started. Our present position was strategically sound, and the more it was extended the greater was the drain on our resources. In addition, every available man was required at the decisive place where victory must be won against our main enemy, that is, the Germans on the Western Front.

General Nixon, however, wished to occupy Nasiriya as early as possible.

At present it was not practicable owing to floods and lack of transport.

In the Ahwaz district and on the River Karun, it was possible to strike the Turks there. If the Turks were defeated decisively in this area our right flank would be secured during an advance up the River Tigris, it would be possible to start work again at the oil wells, and the Turks would be cleared out of Arabistan.

Operations were accordingly entrusted to General Gorringe, commanding the 12th Indian Division (12th, 30th, and 33rd Brigades). The Cavalry Brigade (less 1 regiment) was allotted to his command. The Turks likely to oppose General Gorringe were six battalions, two cavalry regiments, and 7 guns, and about 5,000 Arabs.

By the 13th May Gorringe's force was concentrated at Illa.

Operations were now undertaken against the Turks and tribesmen at Bisaitin, and at Khafajiya on the 14th May. By 8 a.m. on the 16th May effective punitive measures had been taken, and the Turks and Arabs of the Beni Taruf tribe

withdrew on Amara. General Gorringe demonstrated towards this place, in order to prevent the Turks from sending reinforcements to their detachment at Qurna. General Townshend occupied Amara on the 3rd June, and by the 9th June a detachment from General Gorringe's force was sent to this place.

This detachment, consisting of a regiment, a field battery, and three battalions, less one company, reached Amara on the 14th June.

At Ahwaz a detachment of two regiments, a horse artillery battery, a field battery, a section of sappers and miners, and three battalions, was left, and the remainder of the troops were withdrawn to Basra by the 20th June.

The capture of Amara closed the road by which the Turks would operate towards Ahwaz from the River Tigris.

General Nixon now considered that it was necessary for the security of the Basra vilayet to occupy Nasiriya.

It was at the southern end of the River Hai, and it was a suitable place from which the Turks could operate against Basra from the west. It was the headquarters of Turkish civil administration, and the centre of a powerful Arab tribe. Accordingly, General Gorringe, commanding the 30th Infantry Brigade, a field battery, a mountain battery, a company of sappers and miners, a half-battalion of pioneers, and four 4·7 in. guns in boats, left Qurna on the 26th June for Chah-baish en route for Nasiriya.

By the evening of the 29th a channel had been blasted through the dam of the Hamar Lake. By the 3rd July the ships had been hauled through this channel. The enemy's forward position was now located at the junction of the Qurna Safha channel and the Euphrates. On the 5th July the 30th Brigade made a frontal attack against this position with two battalions on either bank. One battalion had to advance in bellums on the south bank. The enemy surrendered after little opposition.

Their main position was now located, 4 miles below Nasiriya, on both sides of the river. The front of the position was covered by creeks and dry water cuts. They had an excellent field of fire over the open plain, and they had obstructed the river about 2 miles below this position.

General Gorringe now had to wait for reinforcements of the 12th Brigade, less a battalion, a field battery, and a howitzer battery. He resumed offensive operations on the

night 13/14th July. His force reached a position 400 yds. from the enemy. He made an attempt to advance on the right bank after a night operation in which a battalion reached a position 1,000 yds. slightly in the rear on the right bank. The position was reached in bellums, but the attempts to wade towards the position led to heavy loss owing to the Turks' accurate fire and to the lack of adequate artillery support.

It was seen that the Turks had been reinforced. It was estimated that they were now 5,000 strong. Accordingly the remainder of General Gorrings's division was sent up by the 20th July. On the 27th July at 05.00 hours the attack was made on both banks with the 12th Brigade attacking on the left bank and the 30th Brigade on the right bank. The frontal attacks were successful by midday, and four hours later the whole Turkish position had been captured with 1,000 prisoners and 15 guns. Nasiriya was occupied on the following day, and we had completely secured the Basra vilayet, and General Nixon's original instructions had been carried out as to the safety of the oil fields.

All important points were adequately held, namely, at Nasiriya there were 3 brigades and Divisional troops. At Amara and Kumait were 2 brigades, less 2 battalions, a regiment and Divisional troops. At Ahwaz was the Cavalry Brigade, less a regiment and two troops, a battalion, and a field battery. At Qurna there was one battalion. At Basra there was the remainder of the 2nd Indian Army Corps, with small detachments at Abadan and Fao.

Owing to this necessarily wide dispersion and the insufficient transport by land and by water, it was necessary to rest and reorganize the administrative services. However, encouraged by success, another forward movement was projected. The security of the force and its maintenance were now not seriously weighed with the questions of policy and prestige, which were allowed to take precedence over strategical and tactical considerations. Our foremost points on the Tigris and Euphrates were by river nearly 200 miles from the sea. The stretch of country below these points was already large enough for two divisions to hold in order to cover securely the future terminus of the Baghdad railway and the oil wells.

Strong Turkish reinforcements were reported to be 140 miles from Amara on the River Tigris.

The reasons given by General Nixon for an advance to Kut were that this place was a possible future base for the enemy's offensive operations, either by the Tigris or by the Hai. He would, by occupying Kut, deprive the enemy of an important centre, and he would gain a position from which he could control the local Arab tribes, and also he could obtain an area in which supplies could be abundant. However, it would entail adding 150 miles of river communications to our already heavy administrative burdens, there were no reinforcements available, and our force would be still further dispersed; also at present the amount of river transport was still inadequate for the needs of the forward troops. General Nixon regarded this campaign as an offensive operation, whereas Mesopotamia was a secondary theatre of war, and the original object of the expedition had now been accomplished. Now policy and the prestige it was hoped to gain in the East by further successes endangered the security of the force. General Nixon hoped to add to our prestige by repeating at Kut and then at Baghdad the successes which he had gained at Amara and Nasiriya. Policy could not be securely carried out if the plan was strategically unsound, in view of the dispersion of the force and the lack of any general reserve, and if the administrative services could not be augmented. Every mile we went forward added to our difficulties, and brought us nearer to the enemy's reinforcements.

However, on the 23rd August, General Townshend was ordered to destroy and disperse the enemy, and to occupy Kut, where the Turks were reported to have a strong position 8 miles below the town.

By the 11th September, Townshend had concentrated his force at Ali Gharbi. By the 13th September he arrived at Musandaq Reach, when the Turks withdrew back to their main position at Es Sinn from Shaikh Saad. By the 15th September General Townshend's division was bivouacked on the right bank of the River Tigris at Abu Rumman, remaining here for eleven days. Here his plans were made for his further advance and attack on the Turks, estimated at 6,000 rifles and 38 guns, holding a front on both sides of the river from Sinn Abtar Redoubt $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the river, to a position 6 miles north of the river. General Townshend divided his force into two columns for operations on both sides of the river. On the northern bank he had three

brigades (less 2½ battalions); on the southern bank he had the 18th Infantry Brigade, which was later to carry out the pursuit on ships up the river. On the 28th September General Townshend's plan was successfully carried out. His plan was to feint against the enemy's right, south of the River Tigris, and then to envelop their left with his main body. On the 27th September our force on the southern bank gained a position within 3,500 yds. from the enemy, and there entrenched its position in line with the 30th Brigade on the northern bank. A boat bridge was constructed at Nukhailat out of sight and shrapnel range from the Turkish position. During the night 27/28th our troops on the southern bank advanced and gained a position within 1,200 yds. of the Turkish forward positions. At 22.30 hours the troops on the north bank began their night march in order to occupy a position from which to contain the Turks' front, and also to envelop their left flank north of the river.

After hard fighting and several counter-attacks the enemy's left flank was enveloped; by dusk our troops on the northern bank were in rear of the Turkish position between the Suwada Marsh and the River Tigris. The troops on the southern bank easily repulsed all Turkish attacks throughout the day. At daybreak on the 29th September it was reported that the Turks had withdrawn during the night. The cavalry and 16th Brigade then occupied Kut. Our losses were over 1,200, and we captured 1,289 prisoners and 17 guns.

On the 30th September the 18th Brigade and a field battery began the pursuit in ships.

General Nixon on the 3rd October reported that he was strong enough to open the road to Baghdad, and in consequence proposed to concentrate at Aziziya.

On the following day he asked if he could be reinforced by another division in order to maintain his position at Baghdad. He hoped that the Turks would retire beyond this place, and he thought that they were demoralized, and that consequently he had an opportunity of routing them altogether.

The Cabinet hoped that the capture of Baghdad would have a considerable effect on the fortunes of the war, and particularly on the Mohammedans throughout the East, and that it would balance our evacuation at Gallipoli. Baghdad certainly was an important point, as it was a road centre and

the military base of Turkish Arabia, situated so that Turkish projects against the Russians in Asia Minor or against the north-west frontier of India through Persia might be facilitated.

The practical point, however, was whether, in view of our responsibilities on the Western Front, we could undertake such an operation with any prospect of success, and then maintain our depleted forces in a big city with a population of 150,000 against superior numbers at the end of a precarious line of communications 227 miles by river from Kut, which was 285 miles from Basra.

To hold Baghdad two more divisions would be required, and then the question of transport and maintenance would have to be considered if the position was to be secured.

It was found that above Kut steamers of over 3 ft. 9 in. draught were of no use, and the provision of more light draught steamers was imperative. In addition, it was reported that Turkish reinforcements under Khalil Pasha were arriving at Baghdad from Bitlis and Baghdad to reinforce the 9,000 Turks now opposing us. At present our daily supply requirements at the front were 208 tons, and these could not be met by the available river transport, and we were entirely dependent on river transport.

If two new divisions arrived, and they must be necessary if our position at Baghdad was to be secure, they could not be supplied, nor could they be brought up by river, and there were no marching roads and no railways. However, on the 24th October General Nixon was authorized to march on Baghdad.

Previously a concentration at Aziziya had been ordered. This place was occupied by the 10th October by the 16th and 17th Brigades, and preparations were made for a further advance for the capture of the Turkish position at Ctesiphon. The Turks were in a strong position, and their reinforcements lately arrived had a high morale, and were of good fighting quality.

On our side no reinforcements were available in the vicinity of Ctesiphon, evacuation of casualties was only possible for 6 per cent of the force engaged, and supplies and transport were insufficient. Tactically also in the battle there was no adequate security, as the attack was made by four columns with no general reserve at dawn on the 22nd November after a night march. By noon, in spite of the

enemy's accurate fire on our advance across 5,000 yds. of plain devoid of any cover, the whole of the Turkish front line was in our possession. Our casualties, however, had been heavy, and our troops were exhausted, and there were no reserves at hand to carry on the offensive. Thus there was a lack of personal direction by the Commander, and subsequent disorganization. Three hours later the Turks counter-attacked, and drove back troops on our right flank, and recaptured 8 guns. By 17.00 hours so heavy had been our casualties that General Townshend was forced to abandon all further ideas of offensive action, and to try to concentrate and reorganize his forces. The enemy too had suffered heavily, and made no attempt to counter-attack during the night, nor during the 23rd until dusk. Their attacks were made throughout the night and were repulsed.

On the 24th our force concentrated, and the Turks withdrew during the night 24/25th to the River Diyala.

General Townshend now wisely decided to retire, in view of the superior forces on his front. By 02.30 hours on the 26th we had reached Lajj with our forces depleted by 4,600 casualties. On the following day the retreat was continued, and Aziziya was reached at 05.00 hours on the 28th. On the morning of the 30th November the retreat for Kut started. In this retreat it must be noted that there was a lack of security, as reliance was placed on the reports of the Flying Corps, and owing to the atmospheric conditions and scarcity of machines in Mesopotamia these could not be continuous. Our cavalry also was not always in touch with the enemy, and though the retreat was successfully carried out, there were many casualties from exhaustion during the final stages. The reason for the hurried and continuous marching for the last 52 miles was that time was lost at Aziziya owing to ignorance of the Turkish movements.

Early on the 3rd December, Kut was entered. General Townshend now evacuated the sick, wounded, and prisoners to Basra by water. On the 6th December the cavalry and a convoy of transport animals were sent down by road, and the Turks now closed round Kut on all sides and completely invested it.

Thus our series of successes was terminated, and we had sustained a severe strategical defeat, due to the fact that there had not been a rigid adherence to the principle of security.

OFFENSIVE ACTION

"The ultimate overthrow of the enemy demands offensive action. A successful defensive, followed by offensive action, can result only in averting defeat.

"The offensive tends to confer the initiative and, with it, liberty of action, to force a defensive conduct upon the enemy, to raise the morale of the forces, and to depress that of the enemy." *F.S.R.*, Vol. II.

1. There can be no better illustration of the successful result of a vigorous offensive than the operations which General Maude carried out to secure Baghdad. This city was entered on the 11th March, and by the 13th March offensive operations began. It was imperative to try to intercept the 13th Turkish Corps, which was falling back from Persia along the Hamadan road before the Russian forces under Baratoff, and to prevent its junction with the 18th Corps. Although the Turks had withdrawn out of reach in a northerly direction General Maude continued with his offensive operations.

The 1st Corps (less 3rd Division) pursued the 18th Turkish Corps up the right bank of the River Tigris, along which a stretch of railway ran from Baghdad up to Samarra. On the 14th March this force defeated the Turks in their located position $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Mushahida station. The result of this battle was due to determined offensive action.

A night march had been made during the night 13/14th March, and then the enemy's position was not located for a considerable time owing to mirage. It was not until 15.20 hours on the 14th March that the attack was launched by the 21st Brigade west of the railway and the 28th Brigade east of the railway, with the 19th Brigade east of the railway supporting the 28th Brigade. It was the determined advance of the 21st Brigade and their continuous offensive action in spite of the opposition of the Turks, 7,000 strong, with 24 guns holding the position, which was attacked frontally, in daylight, that decided this action. The battlefield was then cleared, and a brigade was left to watch the river banks.

Offensive operations were also undertaken up the River Euphrates, where 2,000 Turks with 4 guns were located south of Falluja. The 7th Infantry Brigade occupied this place by the 19th March. Offensive operations were also undertaken on the 14th March by a party in Ford vans from the 14th Division on the right bank of the River Diyala

towards Baquba. This party was reinforced on the 16th March by the 8th Infantry Brigade, with artillery, R.E., Pioneers, and Bridging Train. By the 17th March this force was in the vicinity of Baquba. A feint was made upstream and during the night 17/18th the River Diyala was crossed 3 miles below Baquba, which was captured soon after day-break on the 18th March. Offensive operations were then continued in this area, where a column consisting of the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades, two field brigades R.A. (less 1 battery) one howitzer battery, two field companies, sappers and miners, was concentrated on the 19th March under General Keary. On the 21st the Turks were encountered at Shahraban. Our offensive operations were delayed by the necessity of bridging the Nahrunia and Balad Ruz Canals before we could reach the enemy's position in the Jabal Hamrin held by 4,500 rifles, and 20 guns.

Our operations led to the Turks' withdrawal on the 26th March. Our 8th Brigade followed up and reached Qizil Robat on the 1st April, 1917. The Cavalry Division, assisted by a battalion of the Norfolks, concentrated about Baquba, and contained the Turks until the 30th March, while the 13th Division concentrated on the line Sindiya—Daltawa. This Division was able to begin offensive operations against the 18th Corps on the 29th March. On this date the enemy were attacked near Marah and driven back across the River Adhaim.

Then by the 6th April a column was concentrated on either bank of the River Tigris for further offensive action against the 18th Corps. On the left bank near Sindiya was General Marshall's column, consisting of the 13th Division, a weak cavalry brigade, and attached troops, and a bridging train. On the right bank near Sunaikcha was General Fane's column, consisting of the 7th Division, a squadron of cavalry, artillery, a bridging train, and a flight of R.F.C. On the 8th April offensive operations were begun by General Fane's column against the Turks located in position at Balad station. Their right flank was enveloped, and they were driven back by the 28th Brigade. The 19th Brigade then followed up this success during the night, and captured Harbeh. The Turks now withdrew to the vicinity of Istabulat. General Fane's column now halted to enable the column on the left bank to come up into line with it. General Marshall on the 10th April advanced in an easterly direction

for offensive action against the enemy advancing along the Khalis Canal, and reported to be entrenching about Arab-bu-Abin. He left the 38th Brigade to watch the River Adhaim. On the 11th April at dawn an encounter attack took place with the Turks north-west of Shiala. The enemy withdrew to their entrenched position at Arab-bu-Abin, where they were attacked on the 13th April.

On the 15th April they withdrew to the Jabal Hamrin foothills beyond Deli Abbas.

Here they were contained by Keary's column, consisting of the 13th Division (less yeomanry, an artillery brigade, a company R.E., and the 38th Infantry Brigade), while General Marshall, with the remainder of his column, concentrated at Dugama on the 17th April, in order to continue offensive operations against the Turks, estimated at 2,000, holding the right bank of the River Adhaim. This river was crossed on the night 17/18th April by the 38th Brigade, assisted by Cassels' cavalry.

On the 16th April offensive operations started again on the right bank of the River Tigris.

The enemy holding the Median Wall, 6,500 yds. south-east of Istabulat station, were driven back. The Turks on this bank of the river were now located holding a strong position on either side of the Dujail Canal over which they had 3 bridges behind their forward positions. Our offensive was vigorously pressed throughout the 21st April, 1917. The 19th Brigade attacked across the open plain south of the Dujail Canal, but after capturing the station their further progress was checked. The 21st Brigade attacked north of the Dujail canal, where there were two redoubts, which were the key to the position.

Against these redoubts the attack was vigorously pressed, and they changed hands several times until they were finally held by the Black Watch in spite of counter-attacks. The enemy held their position during the day, but evacuated it during the night 21/22nd April, and withdrew to another one $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther back. Our offensive operations were maintained. Cavalry and armoured cars pursued the enemy, and by midday on the 22nd April our 28th Brigade was in touch again with the enemy.

At 16.20 hours the attack was resumed frontally, while the cavalry and armoured cars enveloped the enemy's right flank, and were able to shell troops in the enemy's rear, and

to reconnoitre Samarra station. Our attacks were continued through the night, and the Turks gradually withdrew. On the 23rd April we reached the railhead at Samarra as a result of continuous offensive operations. On the 24th April the column under General Marshall on the left bank was taking the offensive at Dahuba, and driving back the detachment of the Turkish 13th Corps towards Band-i-Adhaim in the Jabal Hamrin. General Marshall continued to press forward against this detachment, and at daybreak on the 30th April attacked the enemy in this village with the 40th Brigade, supported on the left by the 35th Brigade. Our first attack was very successful, and though the enemy counter-attacked during a heavy dust storm and regained some of the guns and prisoners which we had captured earlier, yet we were able to drive the Turks finally from the field in the course of the day.

The Turks then withdrew through the Jabal Hamrin.

Thus by General Maude's effective and continuous offensive operations he now finally had paralysed the 6th Turkish Army, and had secured the Baghdad vilayet.

During the month of April alone 3,000 prisoners had been taken, there was no enemy within 40 miles of Baghdad, and the position of the whole force in Mesopotamia was comparatively safe.

2. General Maude continued a persistently offensive campaign from the time when he started active operations on the 13th December, 1916, until Baghdad was captured on the 11th March, 1917.

During his preliminary preparations between the 18th August and 12th December, 1916, he was able to concentrate on his main front a force of 72,000 men of four divisions organized into two Corps, and of two cavalry brigades organized into a division. His 1st Corps was in position between Suwaikiya and Sinn Banks, and the 3rd Corps was on the line Nasafiya, Maqasis, Imam-al-Mansur, and Twin Canals. Headquarters and the Cavalry Division were at Arab Village. At dusk on the 13th December the offensive started.

Our plan was to contain the enemy at Sannaiyat, and to seize and secure a point on the Hai stream, while we cleared the enemy from their trench systems on the south bank of the River Tigris by clearing the Khadairi Bend, the Hai triangle, and the Dahra Bend, and finally, by working round

Kut by the south, to cross the River Tigris at a point as far west as possible in order to sever the Turkish communications, and to cut off any troops remaining in the Sannaiyat position. Just before dawn on the 14th December, the 13th Division reached the Hai at Atab, and the cavalry reached Basrugiya. The enemy, expecting an attack on the north of the River Tigris, were completely surprised.

There was no water in the Hai stream at this time at our points of contact with it, and so we had no difficulty in crossing it after capturing their outposts. Our force then changed direction to the north. The Cavalry Division operated on the west bank of the River Hai, and the 13th Division marched up the east bank. By the 16th December the line reached by this division was 1,000 yds. from the Turkish position at its nearest point.

The Cavalry Division had been able to reconnoitre towards the Shumran Bend after reaching a point 2 miles west of Kala Haji Fahan. The R.E. put two pontoon bridges across the River Hai at Atab. The seizure of the Hai stream was of great value in facilitating the British advance, and in preventing the Turks from carrying out an offensive down the River Euphrates. General Maude now made an attempt to cross the River Tigris, and made a systematic siege approach during the next two weeks towards the enemy's Mahamed Abdul Hasan entrenched position, until by the 7th January, 1917, an advance of 2,000 yds. on a front of 3,500 yds. had been made, and we were within assaulting distance of their trenches. On the 9th January the 3rd Division carried out the assault against the Turks on their front in the Khadairi Bend, while the 7th Division shelled and raided the Sannaiyat position. By 09.00 hours on the 9th January, the 8th and 9th Brigades had captured their objectives on an 800 yd. front, and in spite of counter-attacks were able to hold and consolidate their positions. Offensive operations were continued on the following day, when the whole of the enemy's forward positions were occupied by us. Our assaults were continued until gradually the Turks were driven out of their positions until on the morning of the 19th January the whole of the Khadairi Bend was in our possession. Although we lost 1,700 men in this fighting we had, by a continued offensive, driven the enemy from a strongly entrenched position in spite of their quick and determined counter-attacks. General Maude now at once began to

prepare for the attack on the enemy's position held by 3,700 Turks in the Hai salient. This again was to be a deliberate trench to trench attack, starting on the 25th January against the point of the salient. As before, our trenches had to be pushed forward to within assaulting distance. This was accomplished by the 24th January. On the following day the assault was delivered by the 39th and 40th Brigades of the 13th Division up both banks of the River Hai, supported by 66 field guns, 30 howitzers, and eight 60-pounders. Each brigade attacked on a 900 yds. front, and was successful in the first assault in capturing the enemy's forward defences on this frontage. Although on the west bank the Turks were able to drive us back by means of counter-attacks, yet on the following day our offensive operations were continued by the attacks of the 14th Division on the west bank, and by the 13th Division on the east bank.

Each Division on a 900 yds. front was able to capture the enemy's positions.

Gradually we extended our position. General Maude in his dispatches describes violent hand to hand encounters, of bombing and bayonet attacks, and repeated counter-attacks, of charges and assaults across the open, and of ceaseless work by the Royal Flying Corps. On the 3rd February our attack was continued by the 8th Brigade, and the east bank of the River Hai was completely cleared. As a result of further fighting by the morning of the 5th February the Turks evacuated their position in the Hai salient, and took up a new line from the Liquorice Factory to Yusi-fiya on the Shumran Bend. The town of Kut on the north bank of the river was still untaken.

Although the Turks north of the river knew that their retreat for a day's march could be flanked by superior British forces, and that their only protection would be the river, yet they retained their position at Sannaiyat with 3,000 rifles and 19 guns, while by river 20 miles away in the Dahra Bend were 6,500 rifles and 14 guns. Our offensive operations were resumed on the morning of the 9th February by the 38th Brigade against the western end of the enemy's position, which was captured and held on a front of 1,800 yds.

On the 10th February the 14th Division captured the Liquorice Factory. By the 13th February the enemy were finally enclosed in their bend. Then their successive lines were taken one by one by infantry assaults, supported by

the artillery, whose accurate counter battery work was assisted by efficient aeroplane observation. On the morning of the 16th the whole of the right bank up to the Nahr-al-Massaḡ was in our possession.

Our losses during the capture of the Hai triangle and the clearing of the Dahra Bend had been 4,700; but we had driven the enemy from strongly entrenched positions, and lengthened the exposed line of communications of the Turks still holding Sannaiyat. General Maude decided to continue his offensive operations, and to cross the River Tigris with the 3rd Corps at the Shumran Bend, while the 1st Corps renewed their attack on Sannaiyat before the main crossing took place.

At 10.00 hours on the 22nd February, the attack was made against the enemy in the Sannaiyat position. Before night-fall we had gained the enemy's first two lines of trenches. During the night 22/23rd February our final preparations were made. Pontoon parties moved up in three columns towards the ferries, there was a raid at Maḡasis, and another feint at Liquorice Factory. The crossing is described by General Maude in his dispatches as follows: "This site selected for the passage of the River Tigris was at the south end of the Shumran Bend, where the bridge was to be thrown and three ferrying places were located immediately downstream of this point. Just before daybreak on the 23rd February the three ferries* began to work. The first trip at the ferry immediately below the bridge site, where the Norfolks crossed, was a complete surprise, and five machine guns and some 300 prisoners were captured. Two battalions of Gurkhas, who were using the two lower ferries, were met by a staggering fire before they reached the left bank, but in spite of losses in men and pontoons they pressed on gallantly and effected a landing.

"The two downstream ferries were soon under such heavy machine gun fire that they had to be closed, and all ferrying was subsequently carried on by means of upstream ferry. By 07.30 hours about three companies of the Norfolks and some 150 Gurkhas were on the left bank. The enemy's artillery became increasingly active, but was vigorously engaged by ours, and the construction of the bridge commenced. The Norfolks pushed rapidly upstream on the left

* At 05.30 hours the three ferries started to launch their pontoons. The Norfolks were in No. 1 Ferry. The 2/9th Gurkhas were in No. 2 Ferry. The 1/2nd Gurkhas were in No. 3 Ferry.

bank, taking many prisoners, whilst our machine guns on the right bank, west of the Shumran Bend, inflicted casualties on those Turks who tried to escape. The Gurkha battalions on the right and centre were meeting with more opposition, and their progress was slower. By 15.00 hours all three battalions were established on an east and west line 1 mile north of the bridge site, and a fourth battalion was being ferried over.

"The enemy attempted to counter-attack down the centre of the peninsula, and to reinforce along its western edge, but both attempts were foiled by the quickness and accuracy of our artillery. At 16.30 hours the bridge was ready for traffic. By nightfall as a result of the day's operations, our troops had by their unconquerable valour and determination forced a passage over a river in flood, 340 yds. wide, in face of strong opposition, and had secured a position 2,000 yds. in depth, covering the bridgehead, while ahead of this line our patrols were acting vigorously against the enemy's advanced detachments, who had suffered heavy losses, including about 700 prisoners in all. The infantry of one division were across and another division was ready to follow. While the crossing at Shumran was proceeding, Lieut.-General Cobbe had secured the third and fourth lines at Sannaiyat.

"Bombing parties occupied the fifth later, and work was carried on all night, making roads across the maze of trenches for the passage of the artillery and transport.

"Many trenches were choked with corpses, and the open ground where counter-attacks had taken place was strewn with them." The success of this crossing was due to thorough preparation, secrecy, effective feints, simultaneous crossings at three different points, and the excellent technical arrangements made both by artillery and engineers.

The Turks realized that the river defence had fallen behind them, and that their river defence had apparently collapsed. By 12.00 hours on the 24th February the 7th Division had reached the Suwada position, while the 14th Division was continuing offensive operations against the enemy's position on the line of the Dahra Barracks—Shumran Ridge. Thus as General Maude writes in his dispatches: "The successful passage of the river at Shumran on the 23rd February was rapidly and effectively exploited. Early on the morning of the 24th the ridge across the neck of the

Shumran peninsula was in our hands, and it became evident that the enemy was in full retreat in the direction of Bughaila, 24 miles west of Kut-el-Amara. The Turkish depots and stores at many points were in flames, and strong rear-guards, supported by artillery, had been disposed to oppose our advance. By 08.00 hours a strong force of cavalry had crossed the River Tigris, and at once manoeuvred to gain the flank of the Turkish line of retreat. Throughout the day both our cavalry and infantry were heavily engaged, inflicting severe, but as yet unknown, casualties on the enemy. Throughout the fighting our aeroplane squadrons have co-operated with invaluable results, freely using bombs and machine guns from minimum altitudes."

Owing to our offensive Kut was retaken, and the main Turkish army in Mesopotamia was in rapid retreat, after being driven with heavy loss from a strong position. On the 25th February, when the British infantry who had taken the Shumran Bend were moving forward, the naval gunboats steamed up the river from Kut to join in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. The R.F.C. and cavalry were also engaged in offensive action. On the following day, the 26th February, the pursuit continued. The 3rd Corps reached Bughaila, and the Cavalry Division were at Nahr Kellak. By the 1st March both the Cavalry Division and the gunboats arrived at Aziziya. It was then necessary to organize the lines of communication preparatory to a further advance, and to receive orders as to the future policy of the Government. On the 5th March the advance began, when the supply situation was again satisfactory. The cavalry reached Lajj, 25 miles upstream, halfway between Aziziya and Baghdad. "Here," General Maude wrote in his Dispatches, "the Turkish rear-guard was found in an entrenched position, very difficult to locate by reason of a dense dust storm that was blowing, and of a network of nalas with which the country is intersected. The cavalry was hotly engaged with the enemy in this locality throughout the day, and took some prisoners.

"A noticeable feature of the day's work was a brilliant charge, mounted, by the Hussars straight into the Turkish trenches. The enemy retreated during the night." On the 6th March the advance was continued without opposition. The cavalry were able to reach Bawi, the 3rd Corps reached Ctesiphon, the 7th Division arrived at Lor, and the 3rd Division reached Aziziya. By the 7th March the Tigris

force had closed up on Bawi. The Turks on this day were holding the line of the River Diyala, where they had destroyed the bridge. This river, though not strongly held, was a considerable obstacle. It was 120 yds. wide, and the farther bank was "defended by numerous guns and machine guns skilfully sited." (Dispatches.) It was, therefore, unwise to attempt to rush this crossing in the face of the enemy at a point where we were expected without careful preparation, thorough organization, and efforts to mystify the enemy, and to mislead them as to our actual point of crossing. Our first attempts to cross the River Diyala failed. It was not until the 10th March that the East Lancashires and Wiltshires were "linked up with the detachment of the Loyal North Lancashires, which had so heroically held its ground there." (Dispatches.)

On the night of the 10th March the Turks abandoned their last position covering Baghdad on the left bank of the River Tigris. In the meantime, during the last three days' fighting, the 7th Division and the Cavalry Division on their left were to envelop Baghdad from the north-west. Early on the 10th March the 7th Division were advancing towards the Khar Iron Bridge, while the Cavalry Division advanced towards Tel Ramal. So great was the effect of offensive action on the mind of Khalil Pasha and the staff of his 18th Corps watching events near the Iron Bridge over the Khar Canal on the morning of the 10th March, that when they saw our Cavalry Division slowly enveloping the Turkish right flank from the direction of Tel Ramal threatening the railway and Kazimain, and at 15.00 hours that the left of his 14th Division in the Tel Mahomed position on the west bank of the river was also being enveloped, and that the bridges over the River Tigris were broken by the storm, so that no reinforcements could reach the left bank, he issued orders for a retreat at 20.00 hours. By 23.00 hours the Turks began to withdraw, and after a halt continued their march at 02.00 hours on the 11th March for their objective, 19 miles north of Baghdad.

Our leading regiment—the Black Watch—reached Baghdad station at 05.50 hours on the 11th March.

The remainder of the 7th Division was in rear on the main route to Baghdad. On the left bank our patrols occupied Tel Mahomed by 02.30 hours. The 13th Division reached Es Salekh, leaving two battalions to garrison Baghdad. The 14th Division was just west of the bridge constructed

over the River Diyala, while the 3rd Division (less the 7th Brigade south-west of Baghdad) stayed at Bawi. Thus, owing to sound administration and sustained offensive action, our political goal had been reached.

3. During the night 30th November-1st December, during General Townshend's retreat from Kut, the opposing forces were in contact. The Turks shelled our camp during the night, and settled down in the desert $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from it. At daybreak the Turks began to advance. General Townshend decided to take the offensive at once.

At once the artillery opened rapid fire on the Turkish forces at a range of 2,300 yds., while the 18th Brigade made a frontal attack and the 16th and 17th Brigades enveloped the enemy's left flank with the cavalry operating on our outer flank.

Our immediate counter-attack had the desired effect. The Turks were surprised and driven back, and General Townshend was able to break off the engagement by 08.00 hours, and continue to withdraw practically unmolested except for raids by Arab cavalry. By taking the offensive, in spite of the fatigue of his troops, General Townshend was able to enter Kut early on the 3rd December, having completely out-distanced the Turks in his march. Had he not come to that decision to take the offensive on the morning of the 1st December, his retreat would have been harassed, and his losses must have been heavy during his long and continuous retreat.

4. The Turks' attempt to recapture Basra between the 9th December, 1914, and the 14th April, 1915, was prevented by our offensive operations, namely, the battle of Shaiba. The bulk of the Turkish forces were opposite Qurna during December, 1914, where the 17th and 18th Brigades were with 2 squadrons and 22 guns. At Basra there were the 16th Brigade (less detachments) and the 12th Brigade (less one battalion). At Shaiba there was a detachment consisting of 2 squadrons and half a battalion. At Ahwaz there was also a detachment. The Turks intended for the recapture of Basra were concentrated at Nasiriya. At the battle of Shaiba there were approximately 6,540 Turks and 21 guns, as well as 11,000 tribesmen.

General Barrett concentrated at an entrenched perimeter camp at Shaiba two infantry brigades, a field brigade R.A., a mountain artillery brigade, 2 companies of sappers and

miners, a pioneer battalion, and a divisional signal company. The Turks were encamped 6 miles south-west of our position in Barjisiya Wood. On the morning of the 13th April, 1915, the 6th Cavalry Brigade made a reconnaissance to the west and north-west of our camp, and located the enemy holding the north mound strongly, and also the houses in the vicinity.

On receipt of the information, the Commander at Shaiba decided to take the offensive, advancing against the North Mound with the 16th Brigade (less 2 battalions), supported by two field batteries R.A. and an Indian battalion. This important position was captured. The enemy were there reported to be in strength south-west of the camp. Our offensive action was then continued against these troops. The 16th Brigade, pivoting on the north mound, wheeled to its left, with its outer flank prolonged by $1\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of the 18th Brigade. This frontal attack was successful. The enemy were driven from the rifle pits which they had made, and the cavalry brigade, co-operating on the right flank of our infantry battalions, charged the retreating Turks. It was estimated that the enemy casualties were 1,000, and that 400 prisoners and 2 guns had been captured before our troops withdrew to their entrenched camp.

The Turks withdrew to Barjisiya Wood. On the following day, 14th April, the offensive was again resumed. General Melliss was determined to deal decisively with the remainder of the enemy in the vicinity, as he rightly considered that they had been shaken by the previous fighting. Accordingly, leaving two battalions and 3 guns in camp, he advanced with the rest of his force to South Mound at 09.00 hours.

The 16th Brigade made a frontal attack. On its left flank was the 18th Brigade facing towards Zubair. The Cavalry Brigade was on the right of the 16th Brigade with two troops on the left flank. The Field Artillery was in rear of the centre. South Mound was occupied within $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and the enemy were then located in Barjisiya Wood, but it was not possible to locate their trenches or the position of their left flank. In spite of this difficulty in noting the extent of the enemy's position, and consequently in framing accurate orders, General Melliss decided to continue to press the enemy and drive them out of their position. He decided that the 16th Brigade should hold the enemy in front, while the 18th Brigade enveloped the Turks' left flank. Unfortunately, the cavalry were unable to continue the flanking movement

owing to the floods and mud. Two battalions of the 18th Brigade took post on the right of the 16th Brigade. The left of the 16th Brigade was then given the direction of the Watch Tower, which was approximately the position of the enemy's right flank. The advance was continued without incident until a line was reached at the top of a hill from which the ground slopes down to Barjisiya Wood. The enemy's trenches were about 1,200 yds. down this slope. As our troops came over the rise they were met by a very heavy fire from the enemy's trenches, which were very difficult to locate accurately owing to the mirage.

However, the offensive was maintained and the advance was continued in spite of casualties, and in spite of the fact that it was soon found that the enemy's right flank was considerably beyond that of our advancing line. Our whole force, except for one company, soon became deployed into line in an endeavour to outflank the enemy. The artillery closely supported the attacking troops, and were so effective that gradually we were able to work our way forward to assaulting distance, when the whole line fixed bayonets and charged forward.

This final offensive action caused the bulk of the Turks on the front of attack to vacate their positions. So great was the moral effect of our offensive action on the enemy that when the transport carts from Shaiba came out to help with the evacuation of the wounded the Turks still in their forward positions fled, thinking that reinforcements were at hand, owing to the distorted view of the carts through the mirage. In any case they could not have held out for any length of time, as they were short of ammunition, and we could command by our fire the ground between their position and their supports in Barjisiya Wood. Across this fire-swept zone the Turks were not able or willing to bring up the necessary ammunition. Our troops withdrew back to Shaiba camp as, owing to lack of transport, we had not sufficient mobility to carry out a pursuit. The result of our offensive action, however, was considerable. The Turks had failed to capture Basra, and lost 742 prisoners and 2 guns. They withdrew hurriedly to Nasiriya, harried by the Arabs.

5. The offensive operations in the attempts to relieve Kut must now be considered, with the reasons for their failure.

General Aylmer was in command of the troops who were to undertake the relief of Kut. The 7th and 3rd Indian

Divisions had been detached from the Western Front in Europe, and began to arrive in the middle of December. As they disembarked they were sent up to Amara, and then proceeded up the Tigris. In spite of our lack of artillery the Turks were driven out of their advanced position at Ali Gharbi, were again defeated at Shaikh Saad (6th to 9th January, 1916), and after a further defeat at the Wadi (13th January), fell back to the lines of Hanna, 20 miles from Kut, on the left bank of the River Tigris. When, on the 21st January, the relieving force tried to storm the Hanna position the effort failed, and so numerous were the casualties that General Aylmer had to pause in his offensive, and to wait for reinforcements. No further offensive was attempted during February, but during the night 7/8th March, before the 13th Division arrived from Egypt, General Aylmer intended to make a surprise attack against the Turks holding the Es Sinn position on the right bank of the River Tigris, less than 10 miles from Kut, and higher up the river than the Hanna position, and the defile caused by the Suwaikiya Marsh on the left bank. Owing to the Turks holding this defile, our flotilla could not advance above Hanna and give our attacking troops support. Our troops were unable to capture the Sinn position, and had to retire to Shaikh Saad.

General Gorringe now succeeded General Aylmer. No fresh attempt to relieve Kut could be made for nearly a month owing to transport and supply difficulties. On 5th April, however, General Maude's 13th Division took the offensive and penetrated into the defile on the left bank of the River Tigris. Later, however, when the 7th Division and then the 13th Division attacked the Sannaiyat position they were repulsed. A final effort made by the 7th Division on the 22nd April against Sannaiyat failed. The opinion of the Royal Commission on these operations was that the undertaking was without adequate forethought and efficient preparation.

The point also for consideration is whether the offensive should have been undertaken at all in January, 1916. Our success in any offensive operations must depend on the security of our communications, and on the efficiency of their management for supply and reinforcement. In January, 1916, our L. of C. was not in thorough working order. If we waited to concentrate our forces before advancing and the Turks wanted to attack our relieving force, they

would have all the disadvantages of a lengthened line of communications with the consequently increased difficulty of supplying their troops. We should also be getting stronger as time went on, as reinforcements were arriving, and to send them up to the front to assault the Turks before they were acclimatized, organized, and equipped would be a very much greater strain on them than to settle down at the front and await the Turks' attacks. The supply situation in Kut was not desperate. Whereas at the present time there was a deficiency in transport which would increase during the wet weather that must be expected. Also at this time there was a hope of Russian intervention on our behalf against the Turks' communications with Baghdad.

Our Commander-in-Chief no doubt gave orders for the early assumption of the offensive owing to anxiety as to the safety of the garrison at Kut, in view of the superior number of Turks besieging this place, and the possible reinforcements reported to be arriving in the vicinity, and owing to his wish to save the garrison any hardships from lack of supplies. Also, the garrison had used up a good deal of ammunition in withstanding the Turks' attacks, and their reserves would become dangerously low if the Turks continued to attack. Also, on the 6th January, the weather was fine, and bad weather that must shortly come would add to the difficulties and discomforts of the relieving force. In addition, General Nixon was not aware that he now had between his force and Kut four strong well-organized Turkish divisions, whose morale was high owing to their successes at Gallipoli, where we had evacuated Helles and Suvla. He expected that the assumption of the offensive would have a great moral effect. There was no justification for this except that up to the battle of Ctesiphon we had been uniformly successful against their second-grade troops.

Their forces now totalled approximately 16,000 from their 35th, 38th, 45th, and 51st Divisions, and the 36th and 52nd Divisions were expected to arrive shortly. In addition, the ground favoured the Turks.

Owing to lack of land transport, the Tigris Corps could not counterbalance this advantage by mobility and man-oeuvre, and must be confined to a line of advance close to the river, which was strongly held by the enemy. The country near Kut was ideal for checking and delaying any force advancing alongside the north bank of the River

Tigris. The distance between the Suwaikiya Marsh and the River Tigris was not more than a mile, and the marsh itself was so extensive that a detour could not be a practical manoeuvre. Between the marsh and the river was the Turks' strong Sannaiyat position, 25 miles distant from Kut. On the right bank there were the Hai, the Sinn banks, and canals and water channels at right angles to our lines of advance, making excellent obstacles for their delaying action. All these factors militated against successful action, if there were hurried preparations and lack of reconnaissance. Also, the instructions given to General Younghusband, who was to command the leading echelon of the Tigris Corps, were not perfectly understood. General Aylmer intended him to limit his action to the capture of tactical points in the vicinity of Shaikh Saad. General Younghusband's idea was to engage the enemy in sufficient strength so as to hold them to their position. The result was that a hurried attack was forced upon General Aylmer, and consequently there was poor information and lack of artillery support, as there was no time for reconnaissance or registration.

General Aylmer, however, had definitely stated that the Turks were to be held to their positions until the arrival of the remainder of the Tigris Corps. General Younghusband informed his commanders that he intended to drive the Turks' right flank into the loop at Shaikh Saad, and defeat it there. Actually, General Younghusband was deeply committed during the 6th, having only the Cavalry Brigade, and part of the 19th Infantry Brigade in hand on the 7th January, when General Aylmer assumed command.

General Aylmer was, therefore, forced to continue the course of action in which he found himself involved. He could not manoeuvre freely with his force on the left bank closely engaged. To continue with frontal attacks must be costly and unlikely to lead to a rapid decision against an enemy whose dispositions had not yet been accurately located. However, he decided to press the offensive operations on both banks, which General Younghusband had started. He kept in reserve on the right bank the 9th Infantry Brigade and another battalion on the right bank. Later, these reserves were transferred to the left bank as soon as the bridge of boats was completed, and then sent to the right flank to meet possible Turkish counter-attack.

Later, they were sent downstream by night to deal with

a Turkish force reported to have passed round the flank of our position. Although our offensive operation was successful at Shaikh Saad as the Turks withdrew from their position to Hanna and Sannaiyat, yet our heavy casualty list, resulting from the difficulties of country and climate, and lack of means of intercommunication and trained staff, and the consequent errors in the direction of the battle, reacted unfavourably on the men's morale, and was serious in view of the limited time available for the relief of Kut.

Again, at the Wadi battle on the 13th January, the same arguments for continuing our offensive apply with reference to the necessity for the early relief of Kut. It was thought that rations only were available up to the end of January for the garrison of Kut, that the expected rains and floods would add to our difficulties, and that unless the Russians acted soon it would be impossible in the winter season later to co-operate with them at all. Had General Aylmer waited he might have been joined by five battalions on the River Tigris on the way to join him, and five more at Basra, and by two battalions on the sea.

As it was, the opposing numbers were nearly equal, but General Aylmer considered that the time factor was the most important one, and that relief for Kut was urgent before the Turks could add to the strength of their defences or could receive reinforcements, and while they were in a position in which the flank could be turned. The Turks, as he telegraphed to General Headquarters, were holding a position up the Wadi river and on the right bank of the River Tigris opposite with approximately 11,000 men. He therefore decided to envelop the enemy's position with one division and a cavalry brigade at dawn, while containing the Turks in their position with the rest of his force.

Undoubtedly this was a favourable plan, and the Turks by holding a position in which one flank was in the air gave General Aylmer an opportunity to manoeuvre and to deal decisively with the enemy holding the Wadi position. However, the following factors in the operations of this battle prevented the hoped-for decisive result.

Although our troops reached the position of deployment at midnight, the Wadi was not reached till 09.30 hours.

The start at dawn was delayed for an hour, although it was essential to push on rapidly before enemy reinforcements arrived.

The early morning mist delayed the start, but had all arrangements been complete it would have been better to take advantage of the mist to gain the advantage of surprise and concealment. As it was there was little opposition until 11.30 hours. There had been delay while the guns crossed the Wadi in order to support the 35th and 19th Brigades, owing to the very steep banks of the Wadi.

This artillery support could have been given from the south bank of the Wadi.

As it was General Aylmer's intention to turn the enemy's northern flank with a maximum force, while he engaged their front with a minimum force, namely, the 28th Brigade, it would have been better had General Younghusband, when carrying out his orders to move forward in echelons of Brigade, to have had his right brigade forward (the 21st Brigade) instead of his left brigade (the 35th Brigade). The 26th Brigade was not strong enough to carry out the rôle allotted to it, namely, of containing the Turks in their trenches, and thus the frontal and enveloping attacks did not synchronize.

Although the 7th Division did envelop the Turkish left, their original advance was not exploited rapidly, and owing to the difficulty of moving the guns in intersected country, and owing to mirage which prevented accurate observation, there was no effective artillery support against the new position which the Turks were able to take up to meet our movement round their left flank.

Owing to the difficulty of locating positions in a flat, featureless country with inaccurate maps, the final position of the 7th Division was not correctly reported. It was thought that the Turks were nearly surrounded by the end of the day; actually, the troops of the 7th Division were facing south and south-west, and were some way from the Tigris. Again, owing to the difficulty of keeping direction in a country without landmarks, a gap of over a mile was created on the 7th Division front between the 19th and 21st Brigades, when the 19th Brigade was ordered to prolong the right of the 21st Brigade.

Then when the Commander of the 19th Brigade asked for the co-operation of the commander of the 35th Brigade in pressing forward, and in cutting off the few Turks on his front who were not yet strongly entrenched, the latter was not prepared to do more than what was definitely laid down

in his orders, namely, to prolong the line of the 19th Brigade to the right.

Had these two Brigades gone forward at the time the suggestion was made, the Turkish force on this part of the front would have been cut off.

Had the cavalry supported the attack of the 19th Brigade with a determined offensive the result must have been successful. Instead, they were first shelled and then came under long range machine gun fire. In the initial stages of the battle opposition was slight, and they might have cut off the whole Turkish force north of the Wadi. Finally, as most of our ships had not been able to reach the Wadi during the 14th January owing to the strong adverse currents and wind, many units in the 7th Division and 28th Brigade on this day were without rations, and exposed to very cold driving rain, and as the Turks in the position were too strong to be attacked frontally for the present offensive operations had to be abandoned. We had gained a success by our offensive, but at a cost of over 1,600 casualties, and we had not been able to gain our objective.

The Turks were able to occupy the Hanna defile.

General Aylmer now wished to carry out a combined offensive operation with General Townshend issuing from Kut before the Turks were further reinforced. He wished to make his main operation on the right bank of the River Tigris with his 3rd Division and Cavalry Brigade, and to be joined at the Es Sinn position by all the able-bodied troops that General Townshend could get out of Kut in one night. However, such a plan was not the most suitable one at the present time, as only 4,000 men could be got across the River Tigris in one night. This would leave the remainder of the force, all guns and transport, at the mercy of superior Turkish forces on the north bank during the following day.

General Aylmer's orders for his attack on the 21st January were for the troops of the 7th Division to gain a position close to the Turkish trenches. There was to be a bombardment of the enemy's double line of entrenchments across the 1,300 yds. which they were holding between the Tigris and the marsh. The troops of the 7th Division were to establish themselves in a position close to the Turkish trenches, while the infantry on the left bank were to remain in positions gained on the 20th unless opportunities occurred

for gaining ground. If on the morning of the 21st January our leading troops were more than 150 to 200 yds. from the Turkish entrenchments, an advance was to be made up to this distance under cover of the bombardment, so that the assault could take place as soon as the fire of the guns lifted. The main attack was to be made under cover of this bombardment. Unfortunately, the rain had turned the country into a sea of mud. The infantry had to make their way through this knee-deep mud under heavy fire from the enemy's trenches in broad daylight. The covering fire was inadequate, owing to lack of H.E. shells and the difficulty of accurate registration and observation. Our fighting units were also tired after the constant night work in advancing towards the enemy's trenches. Casualties among the British officers also were very high.

Troops also were very wet and cold, and rations were not good.

Intercommunication had to be carried out almost entirely by personal visits of staff officers and by orderlies. The result of our offensive operations on the 21st January was that, though a small party of the Black Watch and a few of the 6th Jats gained a footing in the Turks' trenches, the remainder of the 35th Brigade was unable to support them and carry on the advance. The assault of the 19th Brigade on their right was delivered later, and was unsuccessful. The advance of the 9th Brigade was brought to a standstill when the officers of the forward battalions were put out of action. Then the parties of Black Watch and Jats having exhausted their bombs, escaped back from the Turkish front-line trenches, and rejoined the 35th Brigade. Later the attempts to get forward through the mud and against the Turks' heavy and grazing machine gun fire were checked. General Younghusband then withdrew his troops 1,300 yds. from the enemy's trenches. On the right bank the country became flooded, and any movement became a matter of very great difficulty. Our casualties were approximately 2,700. Any further offensive operations owing to the condition of the troops and owing to the floods became impossible for the present.

Our next offensive operation, undertaken on 8th March, 1916, failed for the following reasons: The orders issued were so detailed that the commander of the columns that reached Dujaila redoubt at dawn did not feel justified in departing

from them, although he had the chance of occupying his objective with little opposition. The Turks had been surprised, and the columns first to arrive could have advanced on to the commanding position of the redoubt without difficulty, but as column C was not up the commander of the two columns did not feel justified in going forward until he either had definite orders to do so, or until the original orders had been complied with to the letter. Had the columns that first arrived pushed on at dawn, the result might have been decisive, as the whole position was comparatively lightly held. The whole conception of this offensive on the 8th March was favourable. A combination of a holding attack at Hanna with an enveloping one against the Sinn position had all the possibilities of success, if the surprise element was included. This factor of surprise we did gain, and the plan carried out started with every prospect of success.

Any other plan would not have been so suitable. Action north of the Suwaikiya Marsh was not possible, owing to our shortage of transport. Such an operation would involve at least two days' marching, and would lead us to the Suwada Marsh, where we might encounter at least a force equal to our own strength of possibly 10,000 men, withdrawn from Hanna, Sinn, and Shumran.

Maintenance of our force so far from the river would be extremely difficult, as all drinking water would have to be carried.

The factor of surprise would be eliminated. Another attack on Hanna would be more costly than before. We had already failed with loss. Behind Hanna were the strong Sannaiyat lines, which would be equally difficult and costly to capture. Also we were still short of artillery and H.E. A crossing in the rear of the Hanna position might have led to decisive results, but we had not sufficient pontoons and other mobile bridging equipment for this operation. Actually there were about 6,000 Turks on the right bank available for operations at Maqasis and Sinn Banks on the morning of the 8th March, and when our A and B columns arrived in front of the key to the position at dawn there were practically no defenders in it at all. Had the attack then been pressed against Dujaila redoubt, success would have been in sight, and we should have been in direct touch with the garrison of Kut. The actual points which militated against success

in the operations as carried out, in addition to not following up the initial surprise, were as follows.

The four brigades employed were split up into two columns. In one of these were three brigades under one Brigadier without additional staff. It would have been better if a whole Division had been employed with one brigade added to it and extra staff attached to help the commander.

This would have facilitated command and co-operation, especially if, in addition, the cavalry Brigade had been put under the orders of the selected Divisional Commander. On arrival at the bend in Dujaila Depression, 2 miles from the Redoubt, unseen by the enemy, three hours were wasted before an advance took place.

The artillery was brought up in order to register on the objective, and then there was no longer any chance of surprising the enemy. If the original columns had launched their attacks on arrival with two brigades, keeping in hand one brigade and keeping in touch with the cavalry operating on their left flank, success would have been assured, as Turkish reinforcements did not begin to arrive till 09.00 hours. Actually, the three brigades when they did attack were unable to reach their objective, and lost heavily from the enemy's effective rifle fire. Later in the day at 16.00 hours when the 8th Brigade attacked, they did actually reach the top of the redoubt, although they had to cross 3,000 yds. of open ground against the Turks' close and effective fire, with the sun in their eyes, and they had to cross the Dujaila Depression, enfiladed by Turkish artillery and machine-gun fire. This brigade was unsupported after the capture of the Redoubt, and was consequently driven out of the position. Throughout the day the cavalry actions were deliberate, and had little effect on the battle. They were not given the definite mission of enveloping the Turks' southern flank and of acting against his reserves and rear. Our artillery were not able to locate the enemy's cleverly concealed machine-guns and rifle pits at the foot of the Dujaila mound, and on the plain east of the Redoubt. For the most part artillery fire was concentrated on the top of the hill. As soon as the artillery fire began to register on our objective the Turks' reserves from Maqasis manned the position. The result, then, of our operations on the 8th March was that the Corps Commander's intention was not carried out, and the Sinn position was not captured.

The Tigris Corps now spent the rest of the month in consolidating its position, preparatory to further offensive operations under General Gorringe for the relief of Kut. The only alternative to the failure to break through on the left bank was to capture the Hanna, Fallahiya, and Sannaiyat positions on the left bank.

Our first offensive operations were completely successful. The Tigris Corps was now up to a strength of 30,000 with 130 guns.

The 13th Division would be available now for operations in addition to the 3rd and 7th Divisions, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, and the 35th, 36th, and 37th Brigades in Corps Reserve. The Turks had a Division in the Hanna position. By the night of the 5th April we had overrun their 3 lines in their Hanna position, and carried their lines at Fallahiya, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in rear. On the following two days we were checked at the Sannaiyat lines, another $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther west. General Gorringe then advanced his 3rd Division on the right bank slowly by infiltration until on the 12th Abu Rumman was captured, and by the night 17/18th April we had gained the bulk of the first line of the Bait Isa position.

On the 22nd April the final attempt was made to relieve Kut, and the third battle of Sannaiyat was unsuccessful. Our casualties since the 5th April had been 25 per cent of the troops engaged, and the remainder were very much exhausted. In our efforts to relieve Kut we had lost 60 per cent of our fighting strength.

With reference to the failure of our offensive operations, certain points must be noted.

The Turks made local counter-attacks with vigour and rapidity. Our artillery had great difficulty in supporting infantry attacks by fire owing to impossibility of accurate observation of their fire, and of the location either of the enemy or of our own troops. The inactivity of our cavalry may be accounted for partly by the weather and the state of the ground after the heavy rains. Although it was necessary to capture Bait Isa to ensure immunity from inundation farther west, yet it was a hazardous operation to use the same troops to capture this position, and also on the following night for operations against Sinn Abtar. Our complicated operations at Bait Isa, involving much movement, compare somewhat unfavourably with the well-organized, rapid, and simple counter-attacks made by the Turks, which

stopped our further attempts on the right bank to relieve Kut.

In our final attack against the Sannaiyat position on the 22nd April the assault should have been carried out by 07.00 hours by the 19th and 21st Brigades, each on a 300 yds. front.

Actually, the 21st Brigade declined to make the attempt one hour before zero, owing to the mud on their front, it was considered, making an advance impossible. However, the river had not risen during the night, and so the floods could not have been greater or the mud worse than when all the plans had been made and agreed to on the previous day. Certainly, the mud was very hampering, and movement was difficult, and so was any accurate fire, as the rifles became clogged. Although the 19th Brigade struggled across to the enemy's first-line trenches and gained a footing in them, yet as the 21st Brigade had not advanced with them they had both flanks in the air. The enemy counter-attacked on both flanks, and though their attacks by the river failed owing to our artillery and effective machine-gun fire from the right bank, the second counter-attack from the east drove our isolated 19th Brigade back to their original starting-line with a loss of 1,300 men. This was our last offensive operation to be carried out for the relief of Kut. These offensive operations, lasting four months, had cost us 60 per cent of our fighting strength.

The daily sick rate had also been very high. "The need for rest was now imperative. Persistent and repeated attempts on both banks had thus failed, and it was known that at the outside not more than six days' supplies remained to the Kut garrison. General Gorrings's troops were nearly worn out.

"The same troops had advanced time and again to assault positions strong by art and held by a determined enemy. For eighteen consecutive days they had done all that men could do to overcome not only the enemy, but also exceptional climatic and physical obstacles, and this on a scale of rations which was far from being sufficient, in view of the exertions they had undergone, but which the shortage of river transport had made it impossible to augment." (Dispatches.)

5. In September, 1917, plans were matured for the attack on Ramadi. In this quarter Ahmed Bey had been considerably reinforced, and he no longer neglected to hold the Mushaid Ridge, running north and south on the right bank of the River

Euphrates, 60 ft. above the plain. The Turks' position was strong, for its right was protected by the Habbaniyah lake. Three miles behind the Mushaid heights was the Turkish main position, running in a semi-circle round Ramadi, both along the eastern bank of the canal between the River Euphrates and the Habbaniyah lake, and then along some sandy downs to the Aziziya Canal, which joins the river a mile west of Ramadi. Our occupation of Ramadi would complete our blockade of the enemy from the south, as it would cut off the desert route from Kerbela by which supplies from the Lower Euphrates were getting through to the Turks. The town also was a convenient centre for the control of the desert tribes, and an important point to hold in connection with the Euphrates irrigation scheme.

Our operations were completely successful, as the offensive was continued with the greatest possible determination. The result was that we captured 3,500 prisoners, 13 guns, and 10 machine guns, as well as a few river craft, and we rendered secure our position on the River Euphrates.

In this operation our plan was to turn the southern flank of the enemy holding Mushaid Ridge, attack Ramadi from the south with the bulk of the column after securing a crossing over the Euphrates Valley Canal. The cavalry were to operate west of the Aziziya Canal, and to get astride the enemy's communications with Hit by blocking the road from Ramadi to Aleppo.

It was hoped to induce the enemy to believe that the main attack was to come from the west on the Euphrates. Therefore, the river was bridged at Madhiz, and a road was made on the left bank of the River Euphrates.

At 18.00 hours on the 27th September, 1917, our two columns left Madhiz. The 12th Brigade was on the right and the 42nd Brigade was on the left. These columns advanced for 5 miles, and then continued for another 2 miles in a westerly direction during the night to a position from which Mushaid Ridge could be attacked at dawn, while an infantry detachment marched round the northern side of Lake Habbaniyah to occupy important tactical features on and behind the southern flank of the Mushaid position, as well as to hold a dam on the Euphrates Valley Canal.

The dawn attack carried out on the 28th September caused the enemy to withdraw from the Mushaid Ridge.

The Turks then shelled it heavily in the belief that the

British still occupied it. Instead our columns were moving south of it, and at 07.00 hours crossed the dam while the cavalry covered by the Mushaid Ridge moved west across the Aziziya canal to a position astride the Aleppo road in order to cut off the enemy's retreat in a northerly direction. The cavalry left the battle area at 07.00 hours, and by 16.00 hours were astride the Aleppo road on a regular line of hills at right angles with the river. At night the cavalry occupied strong points on a front of 3 miles along their position on the hills. As soon as the two columns were in position an attack was started against the Turks' southern front with the 12th Brigade on the right and the 42nd Brigade on the left. The Turks held a low ridge. After stiff fighting our left column gained this ridge, and consolidated their position there. The 12th Brigade forming the right column then passed in rear of the 42nd Brigade, and, becoming the left wing of the force, now gained a footing on the Aziziya Ridge on the left of the 12th Brigade. Thus the enemy were hemmed in on three sides by the two infantry columns and by the cavalry against the River Euphrates. The Turks had no bridge over the river. Their only chance lay in a counter-attack. At 03.00 hours Ahmed Bey made his effort to escape. He tried to break through the cavalry screen, so that he could retreat up the Aleppo road. His main attack was against the 13th Hussars. The fight lasted till dawn, but owing mainly to accurate horse artillery and Hotchkiss gun fire they never got within 50 yds. of the cavalry trenches. At 06.15 hours the infantry attacked from the south and south-east and our 42nd Brigade captured successive positions.

The 39th Garhwalis at 07.30 hours seized the bridge over the River Euphrates, 1 mile east of Ramadi, where the Aleppo road crosses the Aziziya Canal, and they captured three guns and some prisoners, and about the same time the 90th Punjabis entered Ramadi and captured the Turkish Commander—Ahmed Bey. By 11.00 hours the whole of the Turkish Force, consisting of 3,454 men, 13 guns, and 12 machine guns, surrendered as a result of our offensive operations.

6. The final operations which enabled General Marshall to reach Mosul by the 3rd November were the result of sustained offensive operations on the Tigris, starting on the 18th October, 1918. The Tigris operations were under General

Cobbe commanding the 1st Corps, the 17th and 18th Divisions and the 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades. The 3rd Corps was to protect the right flank of the Tigris column and to prevent the Turks from moving down the Lesser Zab. Our plan was to clear the enemy from the left bank of the River Tigris, and thus to facilitate the task of the troops on the right bank of the river, as it would then be possible to enfilade their positions. The mounted troops were to cut the line of retreat on Mosul on the left bank while the armoured cars operated on the other bank round the enemy's flank. By the 18th October General Cobbe's flank detachment reached Tauq. Five days later this detachment reached a position 12 miles south-east of Kirkuk. One of our columns moved along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved round the Turks' left flank. These movements caused the Turks to vacate their strong position at Fatha during the night. On the following day the 11th Cavalry Brigade crossed the Lesser Zab 20 miles above its junction with the River Tigris. This caused the Turks to retreat. The offensive was vigorously maintained by the R.F.C. and the 17th and 18th Divisions against the Turks withdrawing up the River Tigris. The two cavalry brigades crossed the Lesser Zab in order to intercept the Turks in their retreat, while the right flank detachment occupied Kirkuk. The Turks held a position at Humr. They were, however, immediately attacked frontally, while the 11th Cavalry Brigade got right round the enemy's position and seized the Huwaisb gorge astride the road to Mosul. The Turks were now isolated. Pressure frontally was maintained by the 17th Division, and the cavalry held their ground against repeated efforts by the Turks to break through from the south, and by their reinforcements from the north.

Their efforts to break through failed.

Directly these troops surrendered, the offensive was resumed. The 7th Cavalry Brigade and armoured motors pushed on to Kaigara, while the flank column went forward and occupied Altun Kupri. Success was further exploited by a specially formed column, under General Fanshawe, consisting of two cavalry brigades, artillery, and the 54th Infantry Brigade. This column pushed on towards Mosul, where the long protracted campaign in Mesopotamia was thus brought to an end.

7. General Marshall's operations on the River Euphrates

in February and March, 1918, were successful owing to the vigorous offensive being maintained until by the 28th March the enemy was completely demoralized, and was driven 153 miles north-west of Hit.

These operations started with the occupation of Uqbah. The Turks were now found to be holding a position 2 miles above Hit behind the Broad Wadi, with the bulk of their troops at Salahiya, a further 15 miles upstream. Arrangements were now made to bring up supplies for a forward move and to reconnoitre towards Salahiya.

The Turks now slowly retreated towards this place. They were bombed by the R.F.C. during their retreat. By the 26th March they had concentrated at Khan Baghdadi. Offensive operations were now vigorously continued. The plan was for the infantry to make a frontal attack covered by a barrage, while the cavalry and armoured cars enveloped their right flank, and got into position astride the Aleppo road, where it crosses the Wadi Hauran, just as the infantry attack was causing the enemy to retreat. At 23.30 hours on the 26th March, 1918, the Turks made an effort to escape through the centre of the cavalry positions.

They were defeated, and 1,000 prisoners were taken. On the following day the infantry got into touch with the retreating Turks, and in co-operation with the cavalry inflicted a heavy defeat on them. The offensive was vigorously continued up the Aleppo road by the cavalry, R.F.C., and armoured cars. Before dark Haditha and Khan Feheme were reached. On the following day Ana, 80 miles north-west of Hit, was reached.

The armoured motors continued offensive operations for another 73 miles, until the Turks were completely demoralized. The commander and staff of the 50th Turkish Division, and 5,200 prisoners, were captured on the 28th March.

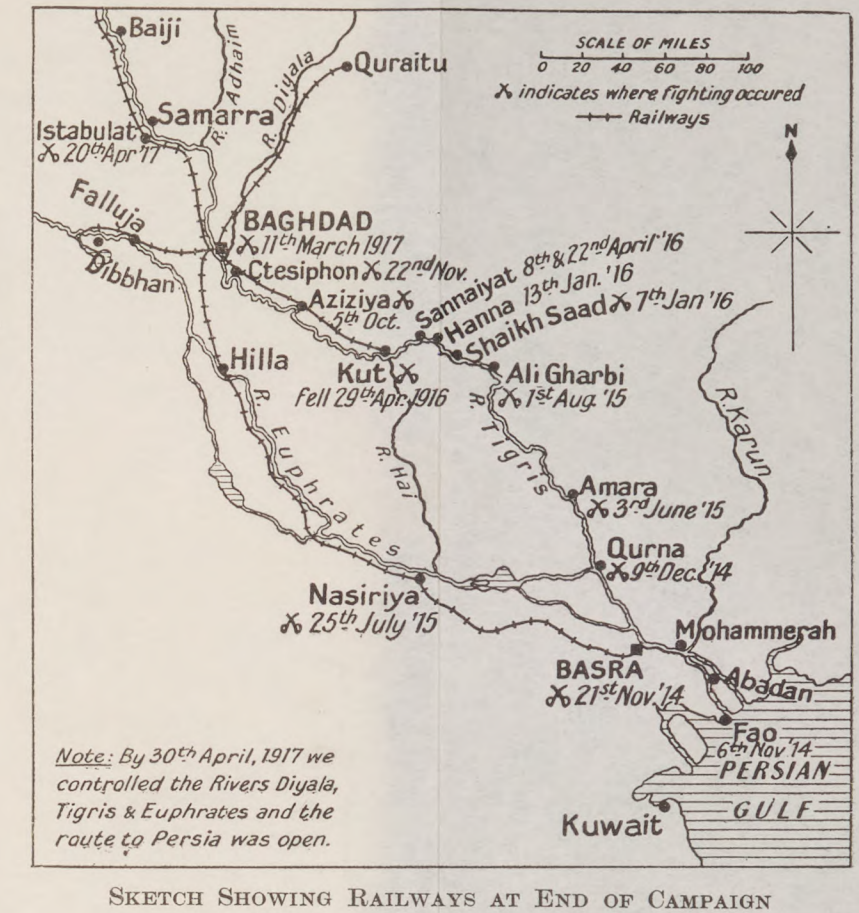
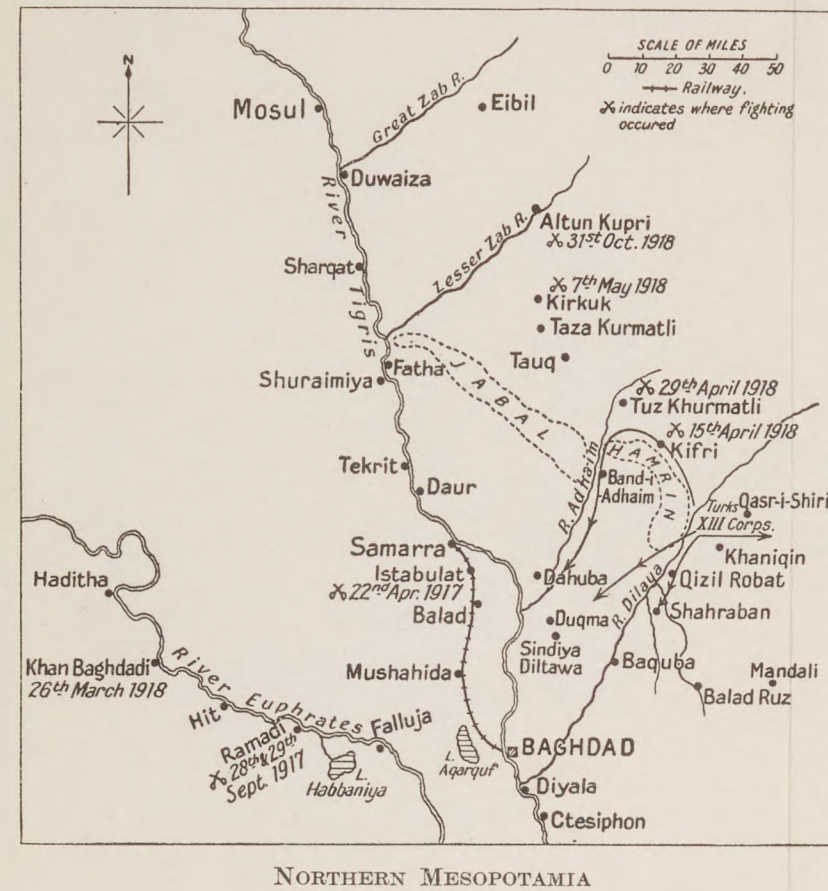
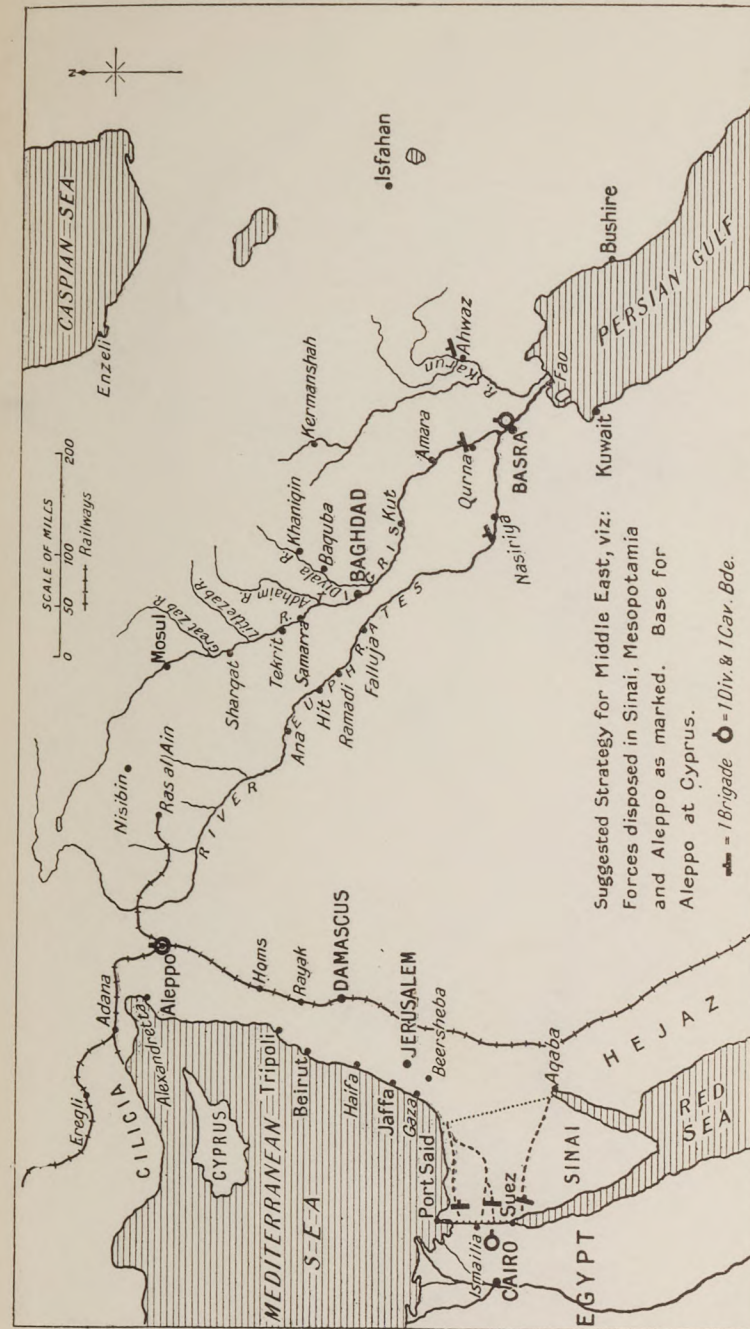
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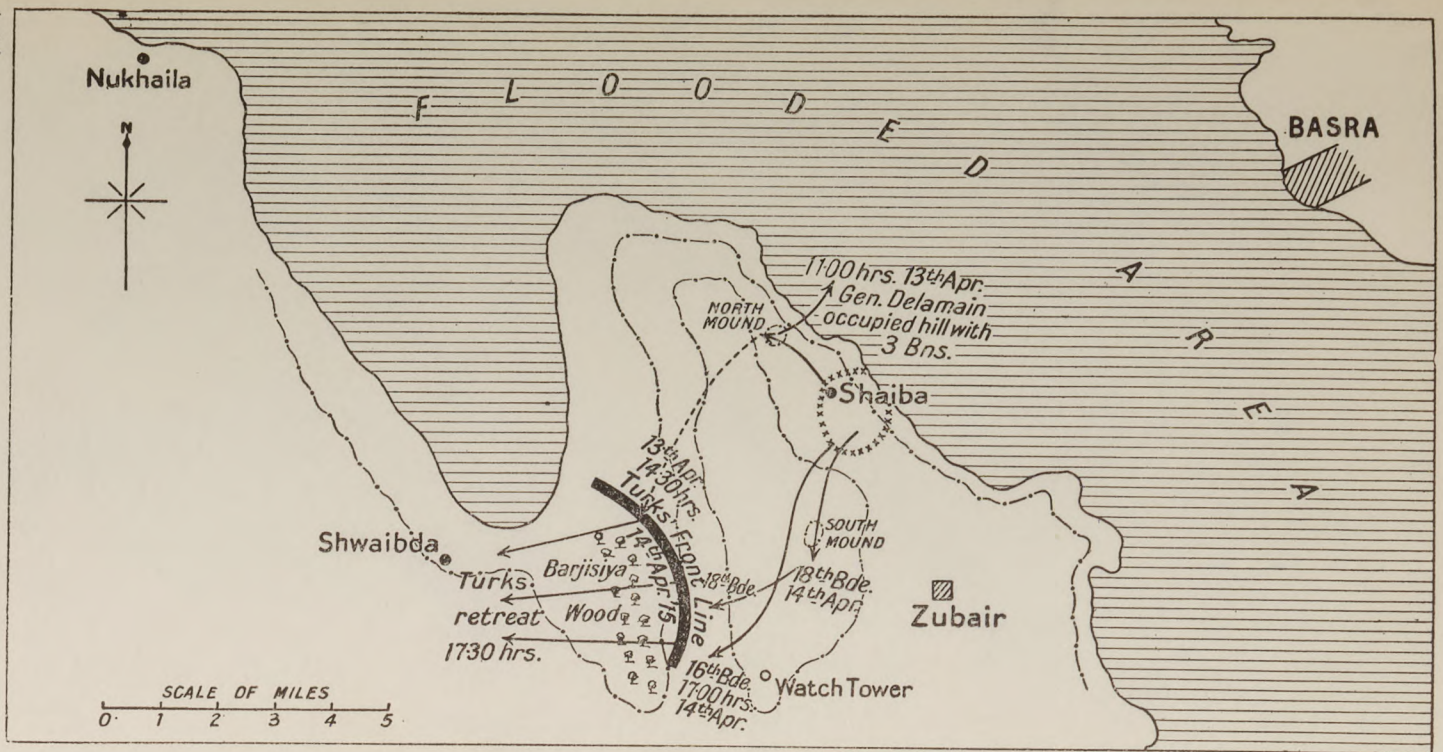
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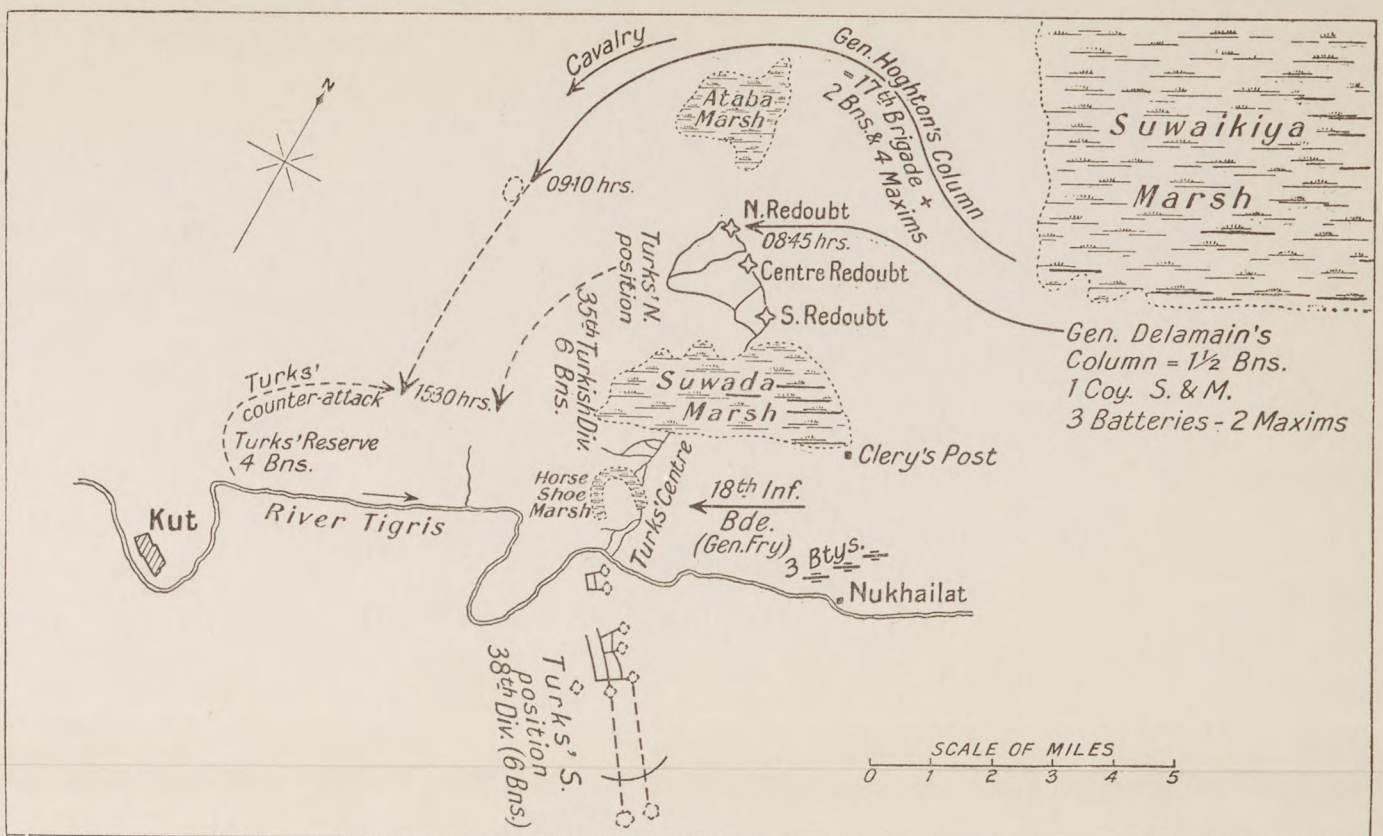
My Campaign in Mesopotamia, Townshend.

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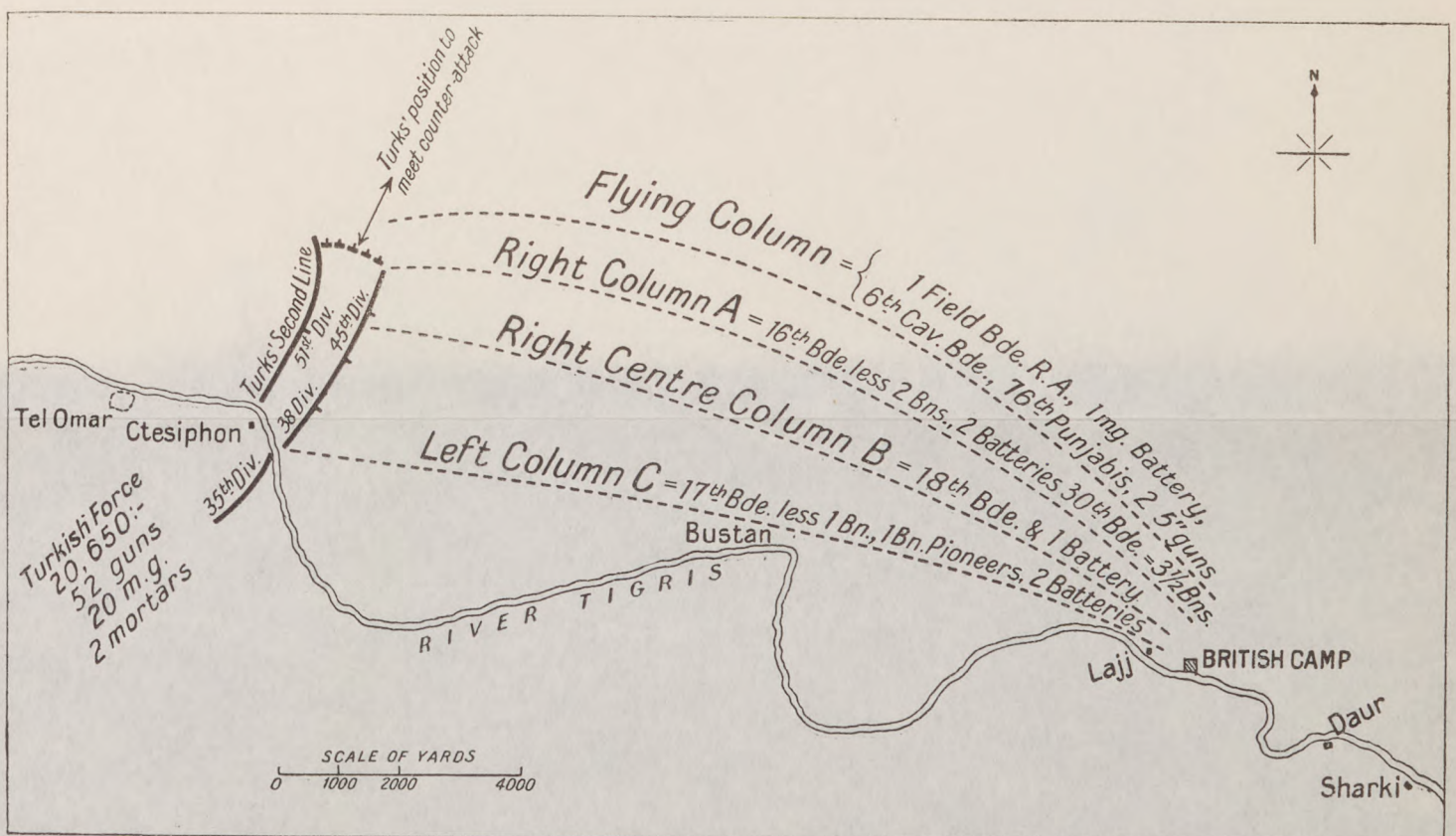




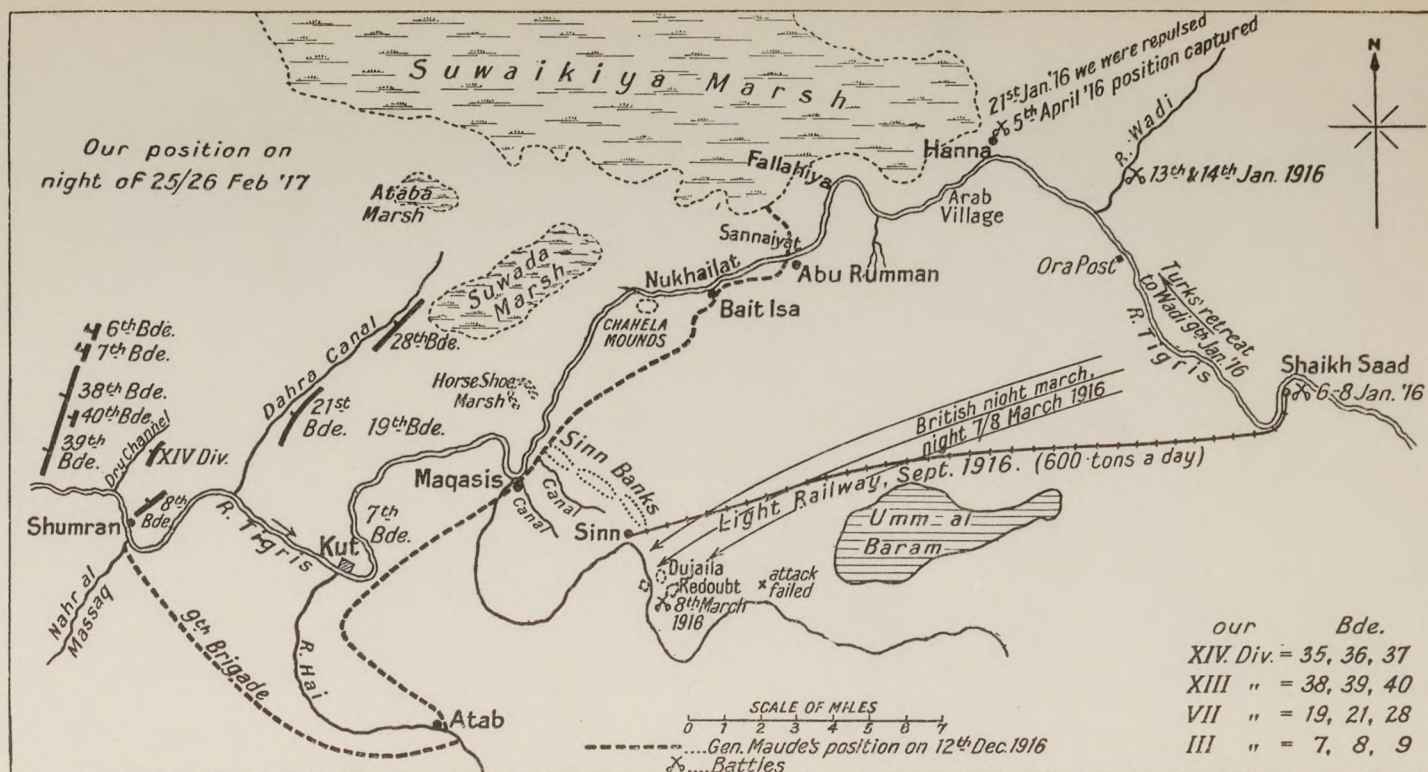
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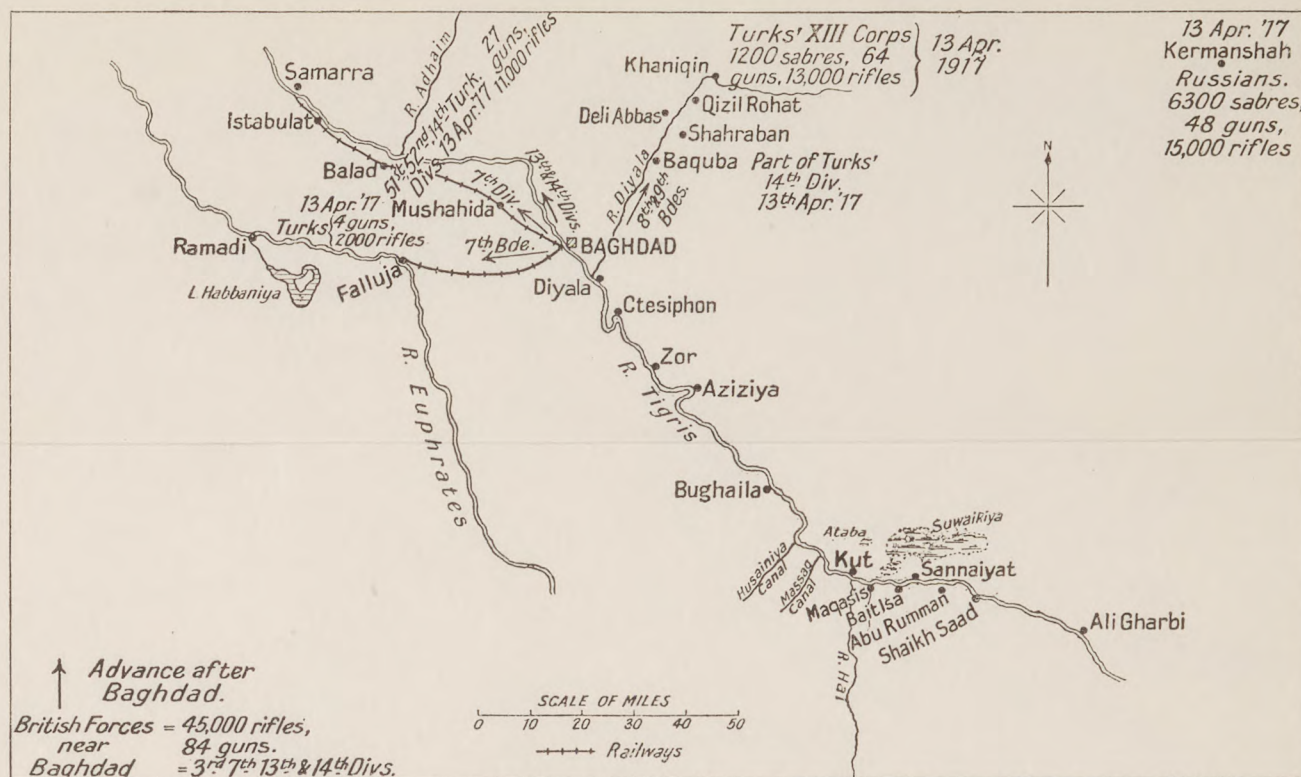
BATTLE OF KUT, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1915



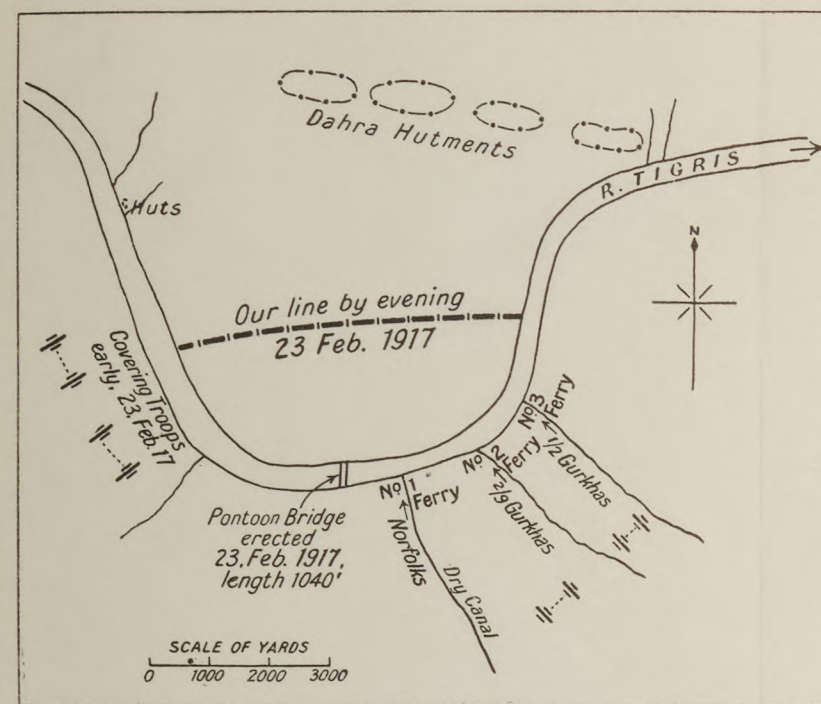
BATTLE OF CTESIPHON, 22ND NOVEMBER, 1915



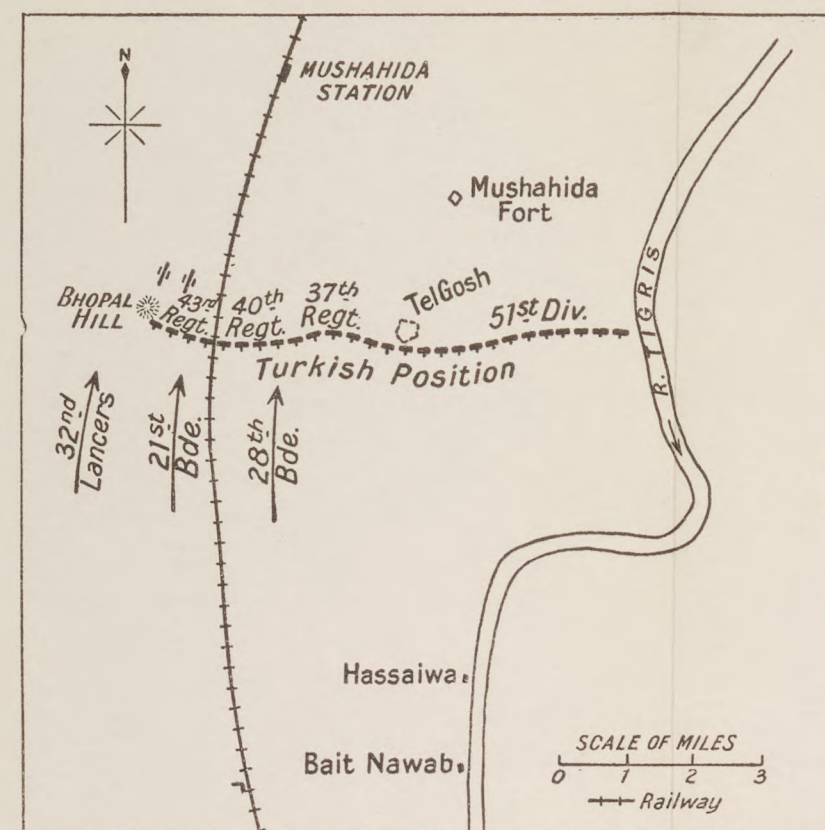
SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE OPERATIONS, 13TH DECEMBER, 1916, TO 25TH FEBRUARY, 1917



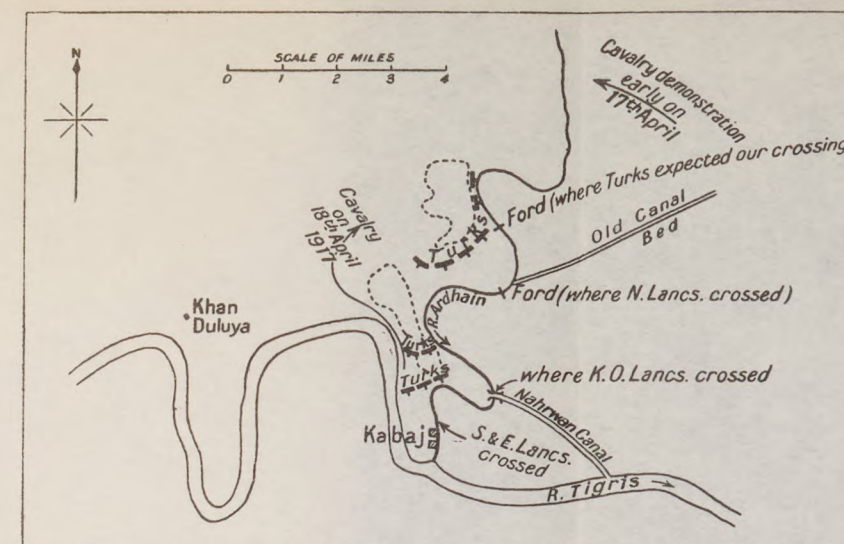
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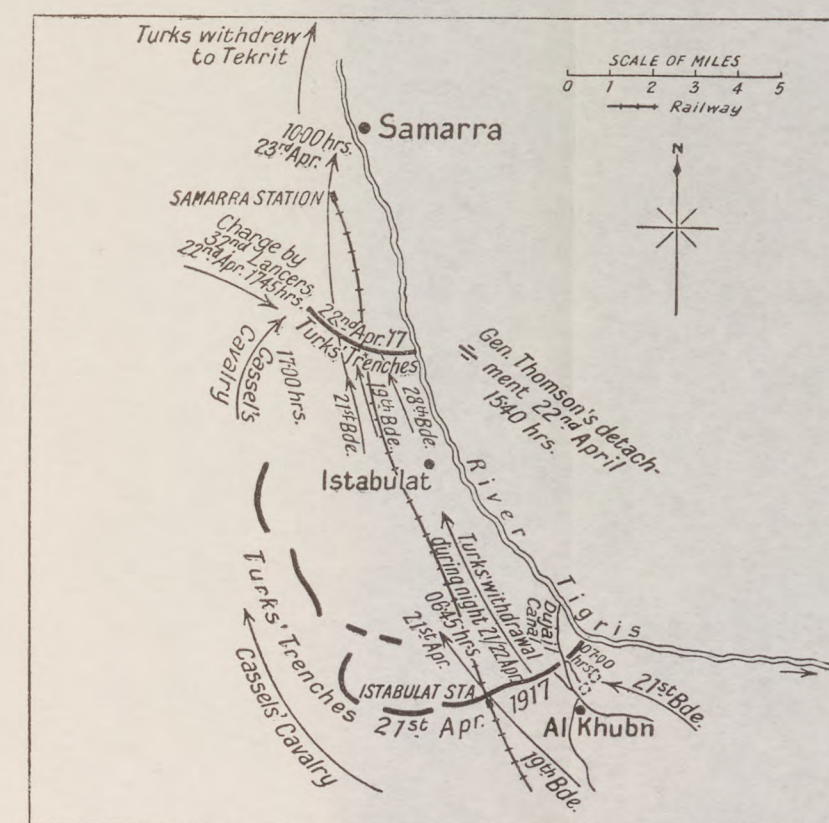
SHUMRAN BEND, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1917
14TH DIVISION CROSSED RIVER TIGRIS



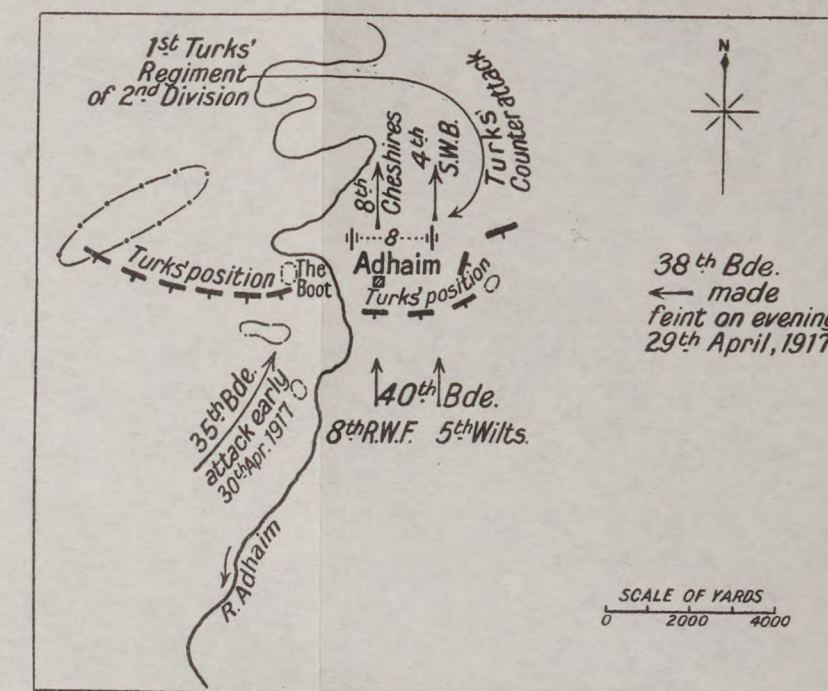
MUSHAHIDA, 14TH MARCH, 1917



CROSSING OF RIVER ADHAIM, NIGHT OF 17/18TH APRIL, 1917,
BY 38TH BRIGADE AND CASSEL'S CAVALRY



ISTABULAT BATTLE, 21ST AND 22ND APRIL, 1917



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